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Volume 19, No. 11

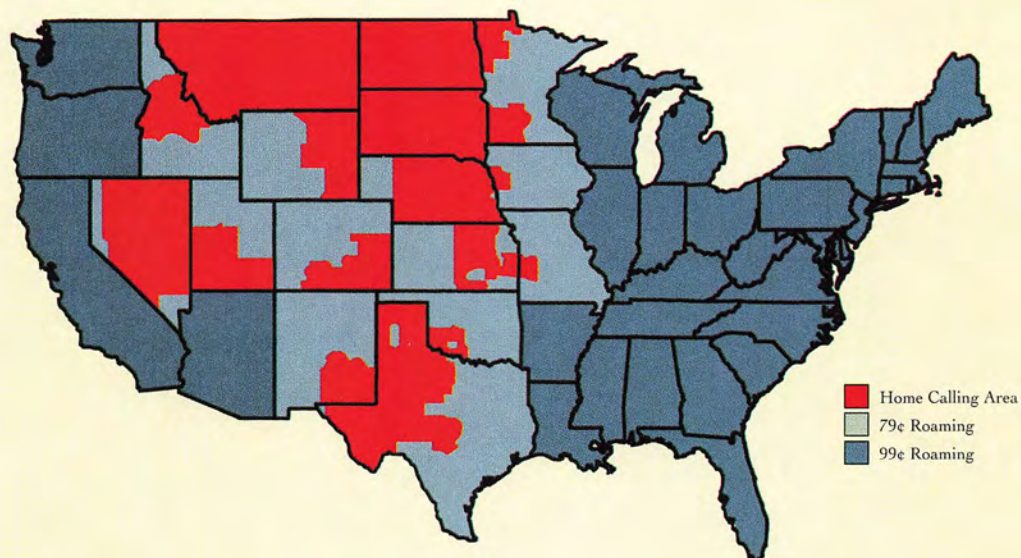
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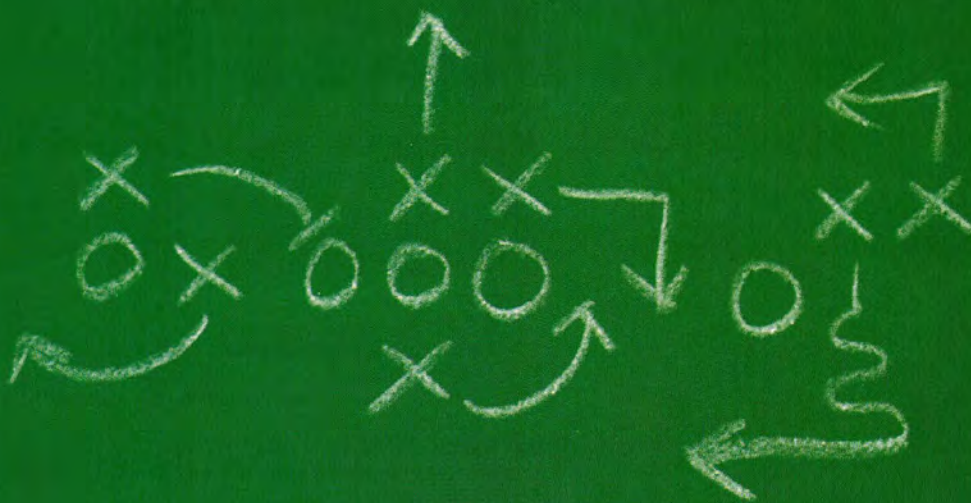
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Huskers Illustrated CONTENTS

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NEXT ISSUE

Look for the review of the Oklahoma State game and a preview of Iowa State around Oct. 7

4 OCTOBER 2, 1999

DEPARTMENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| Letters | 5 |
| Letter From The Editor | 5 |
| NU Notebook | 6 |
| <i>Huskers Illustrated compares the size of some of Nebraska's top offensive lines.</i> | |
| Quick Hits | 7 |
| <i>Owen Frank and six other former Cornhuskers are inducted into the Nebraska Hall of Fame.</i> | |
| State Of The Huskers | 9 |
| <i>Nebraska punter Dan Hadenfeldt is on a record pace, and fans would just as soon see less of him.</i> | |
| From The West | 10 |
| <i>Mike and Ralph Brown have handled everything that's come there way in four seasons at Nebraska.</i> | |
| From The Beat | 11 |
| <i>Coach Frank Solich says Nebraska is not about to abandon its running game.</i> | |
| Scouting Report | 12 |
| <i>The loss of quarterback Tony Lindsay caught up with Oklahoma State in its third game.</i> | |
| Missouri Game Recap | 14 |
| 4th and Inches | 17 |
| Missouri Game Statistics | 18 |
| Player Profile | 23 |
| <i>Nebraska I-back Dan Alexander earns recognition for his good deeds off the field.</i> | |
| Team Of The Decade | 24 |
| <i>Sam Francis and Lloyd Cardwell gave Nebraska a pair of threats from 1934-36.</i> | |
| 25 Years Of Women's Athletics | 28 |
| <i>Cathy Noth saw many changes during her years as a volleyball player and assistant coach at Nebraska.</i> | |
| Side Out | 30 |
| <i>All-American Nancy Meendering has continued the tradition of right-side players at Nebraska.</i> | |
| Crossword Puzzle | 32 |
| This Week In Husker History | 32 |
| Grid Recruiting | 34 |
| <i>Wide receiver recruit Ross Pilkington hopes to play baseball at Nebraska.</i> | |
| Final Word | 38 |



20 Offensive Line Adjusts

Nebraska's offensive line must be able to adapt to different defenses. *By Mike Babcock*

ON THE COVER

Eric Crouch looks for a receiver as Missouri's Justin Smith gives chase. *Photo by L.G. Patterson*

These Numbers Look More Familiar

High-powered running game, big plays contribute to impressive 40-10 victory



Brian Hill

IT'S ONLY one game, and there's a lot of football left to be played, but things would appear to be back to normal in the Nebraska football camp.

This week's numbers — 40 points, 333 yards rushing, 75 offensive plays and an average gain of 6.3 yards per play look a lot more Nebraska-like than the past week or two.

The Huskers also had their first 100-yard rushing game of the season, as Correll Buckhalter came off the bench to gain 132 yards, including a 57-yard burst in the third quarter. There would have been a second if Eric Crouch hadn't been sacked for a 10-yard loss on the final play of the third quarter. He finished with 92 yards rushing.

Buckhalter's long run was one of three big plays by the offense, a dimension missing earlier in the season. Crouch had a 31-yard touchdown run in the first quarter and hit Bobby Newcombe in stride on a well-executed 53-yard touchdown pass in the third period.

Newcombe, then playing quarterback connected with Crouch on a 60-yard scoring pass in the California game, and Crouch promised to return the favor when he was named the starting quarterback the next week.

Defensively, the Blackshirts continued their impressive play, limiting Missouri to 174 total yards, including 25 on the ground. The only points allowed came on a long field goal following a Nebraska fumble and a touchdown pass against the reserve units with 2:13 remaining.

And weakside linebacker Julius Jackson continued to be in the right place at the right time. One week after scoring touchdowns on an interception

and a fumble return against Southern Mississippi, the senior from Gainesville, Texas, had an interception and a fumble recovery against Missouri. Jackson, starting in place of the injured Eric Johnson, now has three interceptions and two fumble recoveries. He's a good example of the depth on the defensive unit.

The only apparent downers in the impressive performance were another seven penalties for 70 yards and five more fumbles, although Nebraska lost just one. In its 4-0 start, Nebraska has now been flagged 28 times for 254 yards and has fumbled 16 times, losing seven. To put those numbers in perspective, the Huskers were penalized 61 times and fumbled 27 times all last season.



In addition to complete coverage of Nebraska's impressive triumph over Missouri, you'll find a couple of interesting stories on the Husker offensive line. Mike Babcock takes a look at the problems created by unusual defenses, such as the one used by Oklahoma State last year in the game at Kansas City. He also

takes a look at how offensive linemen are graded.

In NU Notebook, you can compare the sizes of players from some of top offensive line units in recent history.

Speaking of Oklahoma State, we bring you a preview of the Cowboys, who are trying to make due without injured quarterback Tony Lindsay. Last year's game at Arrowhead went down to the final play.

This year? Stay tuned. ■

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These Guys Are Big

Nebraska's linemen continue to grow

Adam Julch was impressed. "There are some big guys," he said.

Nebraska's starting offensive left tackle and co-captain is big. He stands 6-foot-5 and weighs 320 pounds, give or take. But "they're very big," he said.

"Toni (Fonoti) and (Dan) Waldrop are some of the biggest guys I've ever seen, as far as being that young. I mean, Toni is only what, 17? I don't know ..."

Fonoti, who won't celebrate his 18th birthday until late November, and Waldrop are the biggest in a freshman class that includes several big linemen, both offensive and defensive. And they were a topic of much discussion when they reported for the start of practice in early August.

Waldrop, who is red-shirting, is the biggest, at 6-5 and 336 pounds. Fonoti, who has earned a backup position, is smaller, but only slightly. He's 6-4 and weighed in at 329 pounds.

Of the 19 scholarship freshmen tested in August, six had more than 250 pounds of lean muscle mass, according to Boyd Epley, Nebraska's director of athletic performance.

"Another one was at 249 pounds (of muscle). So that's very, very close to the number we look for in our linemen, to have (at least) 250 pounds of muscle."

Lean muscle mass is determined by subtracting fat from body weight. "It's



Senior tackle Adam Julch (left) stands 6-foot-5 and weighs 320 pounds, but 17-year-old freshman Toni (Fonoti) is already 6-4 and 329.

really bones and fluid, what's left after you take away the fat," Epley said after the freshmen were tested.

"That's by far the biggest group we've ever had as incoming freshmen. They are huge."

Though players such as Waldrop and Fonoti are exceptions, linemen continue to get bigger, as a comparison of Cornhusker offensive lines over the last 30-plus years shows.

Here's how this season's offensive line starters compare in size to those in the recent past:



Dan Waldrop is the biggest at 6-5, 336.



1999

| | |
|------------------|----------|
| LT Adam Julch | 6-5, 320 |
| LG James Sherman | 6-4, 295 |
| C Dominic Raiola | 6-2, 295 |
| RGRuss Hochstein | 6-4, 290 |
| RT Dave Volk | 6-5, 300 |

1994

The original "Pipeline" cleared the way to Tom Osborne's first national championship and is regarded by some as the best offensive line in Cornhusker history.

| | |
|------------------|----------|
| LT Rob Zatechka | 6-5, 315 |
| LG Joel Wilks | 6-3, 280 |
| C Aaron Graham | 6-4, 285 |
| *RG Brenden Stai | 6-5, 300 |
| *RT Zach Wiegert | 6-5, 300 |

1982

This offensive line would rival the "Pipeline" for the distinction as best in history, including two players who would win three Outland Trophies and two Lombardi Awards between them.

| | |
|---------------------|----------|
| LT Randy Theiss | 6-3, 256 |
| LG Mike Mandelko | 6-2, 255 |
| *C Dave Rimington | 6-3, 290 |
| *RGDean Steinkuhler | 6-3, 270 |
| RT Jeff Kwapick | 6-3, 255 |

1971

The 1971 team has been rated among the best in college football history. The offensive line was a significant factor, clearing the way in the "Game of the Century" without one starter.

| | |
|------------------|----------|
| LT Daryl White | 6-4, 256 |
| LG Dick Rupert | 6-2, 221 |
| C Doug Dumlér | 6-3, 230 |
| RG Keith Wortman | 6-3, 238 |
| RT Carl Johnson | 6-4, 245 |

1965

The 1965 team was arguably Coach Bob Devaney's best prior to the back-to-back national championship teams. NCAA rules allowed two-platoon play beginning in 1965.

| | |
|--------------------|----------|
| LT Dennis Carlson | 6-2, 229 |
| *LG LaVerne Allers | 6-0, 209 |
| C Kelly Peterson | 6-0, 223 |
| RG Jim Osberg | 6-0, 205 |
| RT Jim Brown | 6-2, 249 |

(*Indicates player was a consensus All-American.)

Nebraska's other consensus All-America offensive linemen since 1965 (senior season):

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Bob Newton, tackle (1970) | 6-4, 248 |
| Marvin Crenshaw, tackle (1974) | 6-6, 240 |
| Rik Bonness, center (1975) | 6-4, 223 |
| Kelvin Clark, tackle (1978) | 6-4, 275 |
| Randy Schleusener, guard (1980) | 6-7, 242 |
| Mark Traynowicz, center (1984) | 6-6, 265 |
| Jake Young, center (1989) | 6-4, 270 |
| Will Shields, guard (1992) | 6-1, 305 |
| Aaron Taylor, guard-center (1997) | 6-1, 305 ■ |

BIG ENOUGH TO APOLOGIZE

Aaron Wills, a starting rush end of the Nebraska football team, was among those openly critical of DeAngelo Evans after the junior I-back quit the team following the California game.

Wills later regretted his remarks, telling the Lincoln Journal Star: "I read my comments in the paper, and I talked to my parents and people close to me. They said my comments sounded harsh.

"I stood back and looked at myself, and I agree they were harsh. If I could publicly apologize to DeAngelo and tell him I'm sorry for those comments, I'd feel a lot better."

BUCK STOPS HERE

Coach Frank Solich took full responsibility for dismissing Evans from the team. Evans claimed that Solich had been swayed by his former teammates, the majority of whom didn't want him back.

Said Solich: "It was my decision as to whether or not he came back.

"I did want to get a general feel of our coaches. I did want to get a general feel of our players. There's been cases where the Unity Council has gotten a feel from the team as to where it's at. I don't think you can ever not take into consideration your team's feelings, so you try to get a pulse on where everything is. But when it came down to who was going to make that decision, it was going to be me."

ON A LIGHTER NOTE

True freshman offensive guard Toniu Fonoti says among the things that surprised him when he got to Nebraska was the size of the players — or their lack of it, from his point of view.

"I was expecting a lot of big guys, like I saw on TV," he said. "I thought they were huge, but they were all about 6-3, 6-4, all about the same height as me. I was kind of surprised by that."

Everything is relative, of course. Fonoti is 6-4 and 329 pounds.

QUICK HITS

What's Happening In Nebraska Athletics?

HALL OF FAME

Bobby Reynolds came from Grand Island, Neb., to set a standard for Nebraska running backs in the modern era. He earned the nickname "Mr. Touchdown" after leading the nation in scoring and earning All-America honors as a sophomore in 1950. He was hampered by injuries the rest of his career.

Reynolds wasn't the first notable running back from Grand Island to play for the Cornhuskers, however. Owen Frank, whom many old-timers considered Reynolds' equal, also came from Hall County.

Frank played on teams coached by W.C. "King" Cole and E.O. "Jumbo" Stiehm, earning letters in 1909, 1910 and 1911. He still holds the school record for extra-point conversions in a game with 17, during a 119-0 victory against Haskell Indian School at Nebraska Athletic Field in 1910.

The game, the most lopsided in Cornhusker history, was payback for the 1909 game at Lawrence, Kan., which Haskell won 16-5. It also was the final game in Cole's four-season coaching tenure.

Nebraska opened the 1911 season under Stiehm with a 117-0 victory against Kearney State, meaning in consecutive games over two seasons the Cornhuskers outscored their opponents 236-0.

In any case, Frank was involved in both games. He earned all-conference recognition in 1909 and 1910 and continued as an assistant coach under Stiehm, using innovative scouting reports that included photographs taken with a pocket camera as well as hand-written notes.

His scouting report and photos contributed to Nebraska's 7-0 upset of Minnesota at Lincoln in 1913. Minnesota was so angry about the loss it discontinued the series with the Cornhuskers.

Frank was among seven former Cornhuskers inducted in the Nebraska Hall of Fame, during a ceremony at halftime of Nebraska's 20-13 victory against Southern Mississippi in mid-September.

The others were Don Glantz (1953-54), Tyrone Robertson (1960-62), Lyle Sittler (1962-64), Jim McFarland (1968-69), Jarvis Redwine (1979-80) and Steve Taylor (1985-88).

In addition, Burton "Bud" Feaster, Bob Frieze, Alvin Holder and Jerry Joy were inducted into the Hall, which is sponsored by the Nebraska chapter of the National Football Foundation and College Football Hall of Fame. Feaster played at York College in the mid-1930s, Frieze at Midland Lutheran in the early 1960s and Holder at Peru State in the early 1980s. Joy coached at Peru State (1975-82).

The Cornhuskers other inductees:

Glantz earned All-Big Seven recognition as a tackle on Coach Bill Glassford's next-to-last Nebraska team in 1954, which lost to Duke in the 1955 Orange Bowl.

Robertson was among the players involved in the dramatic turnaround under Coach Bob Devaney, earning All-Big Eight honors as a tackle as a senior in 1962.

Sittler, who was from Crete, Neb., also contributed to the turnaround, playing on Devaney's first three teams. He was a co-captain and All-Big Eight center as a senior in 1964.

McFarland was an All-Big Eight tight end in 1969, the season that set the stage for back-to-back national championships and began a 32-game unbeaten streak.

Redwine, the first Cornhusker to rush for 1,000 yards in back-to-back seasons, transferred from Oregon State. His nickname was "Marvelous," and he became very popular with fans.

Taylor, a three-year starter at quarterback, ranks fourth in career total offense at Nebraska with 4,940 yards. He was first-team All-Big Eight in 1987 and 1988 and earned All-America honors in 1988.

OOPS

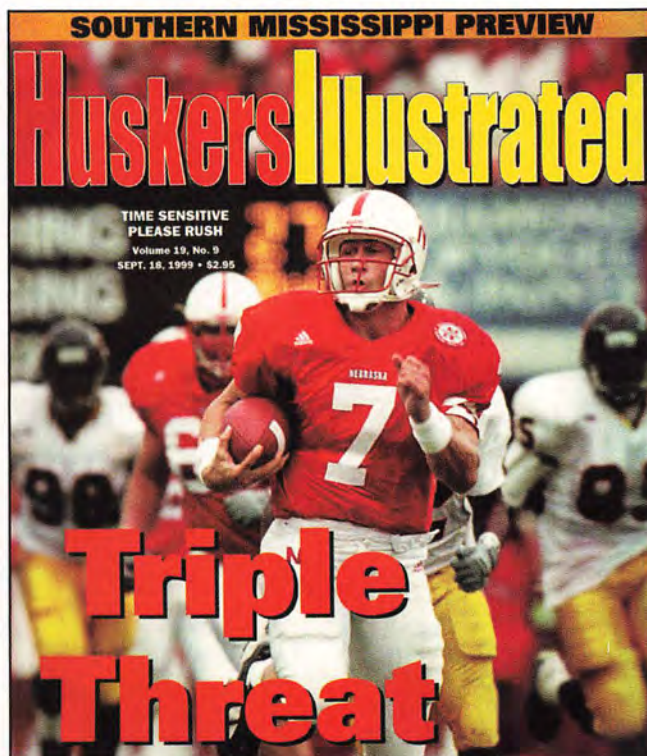
All good things must come to an end. But that cliché offered little solace to the Nebraska volleyball team, which lost to Kansas State 9-15, 14-16, 18-16, 15-7, 17-15 at the Coliseum.

The loss was the Huskers' first against a conference team at the Coliseum, ever during the regular season. Since 1983, when the Big Eight began keeping track, Nebraska was 101-0 at the Coliseum. In addition, the Huskers had never lost to Kansas State. The record was 59-0.

The only former Big Eight school to defeat Nebraska at the Coliseum was Missouri, which won at the Husker Invitational in 1977. Texas defeated the Huskers there in 1986, but the Longhorns, now members of the Big 12 Conference, were in the Southwest Conference at the time.

Colorado defeated Nebraska in Lincoln in 1997, but at the Devaney Sports Center. ■

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. . . ALL THE TIME

They Hate To See Him Coming

Punter Hadenfeldt knows fans are disappointed when Huskers need his services



Mike BABCOCK

DAN HADENFELDT OFTEN HEARS a collective sigh of disappointment from the crowd when he runs onto the field at Memorial Stadium. And the sighs are more intense on fourth-and-short.

Then "the whole student section is yelling: 'Go for it,'" he said.

It's nothing personal, really. It's just that Hadenfeldt is Nebraska's punter, and the fans would rather that his services weren't needed, that he never do what he has done

so well.

"You try not to think about what the attitude is when you're running on the field," he said. "You just hope that it's a little happier when you're walking off, that hopefully you did something well and put the defense in good position to keep them pinned in their own territory."

That way the Cornhuskers can end up with good field position on the exchange.

Fans at Memorial Stadium probably saw a little more of Hadenfeldt than they would like in the first two home games. With Nebraska's offense sputtering, he punted 14 times.

At such a pace, he would break the Cornhuskers' single-season record of 69 punts, set by Dana Stephenson in 1967. Through three games, the senior from Des Moines also was on pace to break Nebraska's single-season record for punting average, set by Bill Lafleur last season.

Lafleur averaged 44.9 yards on 52 punts, the most since 1976.

Hadenfeldt averaged 48.6 yards on 17 punts in the first three games.

He isn't thinking about Lafleur's record, however. Distance isn't even his first concern.

"Our goal is to pin them as deep as we can, get a high enough and well enough placed kick that the coverage has time to get down there and keep it out of the end zone," Hadenfeldt said.

If the yardage is there, fine. But "you can't worry too much about your average," he said. "If it was up to me, I wish they didn't even publish that thing all year because it's just a distraction.

"If it's not as high as you think it should be, then you're putting undue pressure on yourself. And if it's higher than what you thought . . . well, it's not important. There are a lot of situations that are going to dictate what that number is. Something I've learned here is, all the emphasis is on team goals.

"Obviously I have individual goals. But they're never more important than any team goals."

Hadenfeldt has learned that from four years of watching. Prior to this season, he had never punted in competition,

and he had only attempted four extra-point kicks, one of which was blocked.

As was the case for Lafleur last season, this is Hadenfeldt's only chance. And he is committed to making the most of it. "There's somewhat of a sense of urgency within me," he said.

"Every day I'm out at practice, I'm really enjoying it, just being around my teammates, enjoying the whole college football experience. These first (few) games have really gone fast."

Like Lafleur and two of the other four who have punted

for the Cornhuskers during the 1990s, Hadenfeldt walked on. And because of a stress fracture in his lower back, he didn't get started until the spring of his freshman year, after he considered transferring to Iowa State.

He even talked to former coach Tom Osborne about getting a release to at least talk to Iowa State, where a former high school coach, Mike Woodley, was, and is, an assistant.

He stayed, however, determined to succeed, even if that meant waiting four years, which it did. "I just really wanted to find out for myself at what level I could play," said Hadenfeldt.

"I knew that the competition would be great, that it would be outstanding here. And it has been. But I guess I looked at that more as a challenge instead of an obstacle."

Also like Lafleur, Hadenfeldt is an exceptional athlete and, along with red-

shirted freshman place-kicker Josh Brown often helps out on the scout team during practice.

"Granted, when we help out it's not very physical," Hadenfeldt said.

But the important thing is, they're involved. "I don't like to see my teammates sitting around, wasting practice time," he said. "They're out there working hard.

"So I try to use the time we have to our advantage."

He and Brown, who has been hampered by a severe groin pull, made a pact prior to the season, "that we were not going to let either one of us be a weak link with this team," he said. "We wanted to be as consistent with the high level of play as our offense and defense."

Actually, he has been considerably more consistent than the offense.

After he punted eight times against Southern Mississippi, there were those in the pressbox who would have voted him the Cornhuskers' offensive player of the game. ■



Senior Dan Hadenfeldt averaged 48.6 yards on 17 punts in the first three games.

Mike Babcock is a former sports columnist for the Lincoln Journal Star. He has covered Nebraska football for more than 20 years. Mike can be reached at mdb@inetnebr.com or P.O. Box 6782, Lincoln, NE 68506.

Mike, Ralph Brown 'Team-First' Kind Of Guys

**Defensive coordinator McBride
says it's like having two coaches out there**



**Bob
SCHALLER**

UNDER SEVERAL SCENARIOS, Mike Brown and Ralph Brown could be described as the dynamic duo.

Both are all-American candidates for their play on the field.

Both have played all four years.

Ralph plays the finesse position of cornerback. He's been a starter for four years. He stands 5-feet-10 inches and weighs 180 pounds. He's led the Huskers in pass

breakups all three seasons he's been a Husker — including a school record 14 last season.

Mike plays the head-hunting, multi-responsibility position of rover, where he can cover receivers, tight ends or running backs because of his nose for the ball and his experience as a back-up cornerback as a freshman. He's a little more physically intimidating than Ralph — Mike is 5-10, 205.

Both are honor students. Ralph has covered the schoolwork as he would a wide receiver. He will graduate in just 3 1/2 years — seven semesters — with a degree in communications. Mike will graduate on time in May, with a degree in business administration. He is a two-time Academic All-Big 12 selection.

"What will I miss about Mike and Ralph?" Husker defensive coordinator Charlie McBride asks, repeating the question after both picked off passes against Cal this season. "How about, 'What won't I miss?' That's a better question."

The two have handled everything on the field with amazing efficiency, ability and an attitude that has always been professional.

"In the three years I have worked with Ralph Brown, he has only played at one speed," said secondary coach George Darlington. "There has never been one instance, not in practice or in a game, where he hasn't gone 100 percent. As a coach, I appreciate that."

While Ralph has been breaking up passes, Mike has been breaking opposing backs and receivers with his bone-crushing hits. He led the Huskers in tackles as a sophomore and junior.

"(Mike) is a sure tackler who packs a lot of punch," Darlington said. "If he misses a tackle, it is a shock."

It's also a shock to watch the two practice. They have the attention to detail, work ethic and attitude that coaches love. In fact, McBride believes both will be successful coaches if they choose that path.

"It's like having two coaches out there with them," McBride said. "They'll help the younger kids out, pointing out responsibilities or nuances they've learned. But they'll also get on other kids if they don't pick it up in terms of working hard or playing smart. That raises the level of everyone in the secondary because they have to work toward the standard that Mike and Ralph set."

Keyuo Craver has seen that first-hand. Craver moved in as a true freshman last season and played a lot before becoming a starter this season. He credits the Browns with helping him adjust.

"The football stuff — everyone knows that they know all that," Craver said. "But the more important thing, I think, is how they handle everything, even off-the-field stuff. They set an example that you want to live up to yourself. They get on you if you don't get it right, but they'll show you how to do it, too. They want everyone to succeed because they're such 'team-first' kind of guys."

McBride has holes to fill every year, whether it's a lineman, linebacker, rush end or someone in the secondary. But these Browns aren't just "someones" to McBride.

"Those are two players I will remember as long as I live," McBride said. "They are team players — they are just so unselfish. They've played since they were freshmen. Now that they're seniors . . . it will be sad when they're gone because they've kind of been the heart of our defense."

They've also leaned on each other through the years. Mike came from Arizona and Ralph from California, but the bond that has developed through the years will cross any geographic lines.

"I credit and thank God for all my blessings, first and foremost," said Mike Brown, whose words are spoken as directly and firmly as the hits he levels on opponents. "I am also thankful to have this respect and friendship with Ralph. The friendship we've had is about much more than football. He's someone I can talk to — really relate to. We'll be friends forever."

Ralph, who speaks softly but is a man of a few — but just a few — more words than Mike, agrees that when the two leave Lincoln for destinations that will undoubtedly include NFL stops, the friendship won't be left behind.

"The way we were raised, football is secondary," Ralph, also a devout Christian, said. "I like the way Mike has always stayed humble."

So humble that when he was asked a pointed question in the pre-season about Ralph getting too much of the hype, he knocked it down like a wayward pass.

"Ralph Brown deserves the credit," Mike said. "He's the best player on our defense."

They will be hard to replace on the field. But off the field — where the game of life is played — that's where these players left no question marks about their character, heart or the kind of young men they are.

The loss of the Browns will leave the Big Red blue, but the memories and accomplishments, as McBride said, will last a lifetime. ■



**Ralph (left) and
Mike Brown will
be difficult to
replace.**

Bob Schaller covers the Huskers for the Scottsbluff Star-Herald. He has also written several books, including "Touchdown Tommie" and "Roar of Silence: The Kenny Walker Story." Bob can be reached at schallerrc@aol.com.

Huskers Not Running On Empty

Offensive line prefers to pound away at defenses



Curt McKEEVER

FRANK SOLICH SAW an open-field opportunity, so he did what was normal.

He ran for it.

"We can air it out," he said, when asked how to fix his team's un-Nebraskalike rushing production. "We can throw if you'd like. It's something we'll have to look at, if we're not moving the ball on the ground."

This was two days after Southern Mississippi held the Cornhuskers to 119 yards rushing. And in the previous game,

California had limited Nebraska to 114 yards.

Solich had enough of a smile on his face to keep his post-practice comment from being taken too seriously.

"We're still going to be built on running the ball," he added. "You don't just throw everything out the window and go to a passing game overnight."

Maybe not, but Nebraska wouldn't be the first school to junk a scheme because things weren't working.

After the first month of the season, one might wonder about who was inputting the NCAA Division I-A national statistics. Iowa State was leading the country in rushing.

That's right. Iowa State.

Meanwhile, Nebraska was 25th, averaging dwqwe than 200 yards per game.

Now, before you start thinking maybe Solich should switch things up, consider that Southern Miss was 11th nationally at stopping the run and Cal was 39th.

Iowa State's first three opponents included NCAA Division I-AA Indiana State, Iowa and Nevada-Las Vegas. Iowa yielded 347 yards rushing to Nebraska in both team's season opener and 310 the next week at Iowa State. Nevada-Las Vegas was 104th out of 114 teams against the run.

Solich said the defenses posed by California and Southern Mississippi caused some of the Husker power outage. Penalties, missed assignments by offensive linemen, backs and receivers, and other mistakes also affected the output.

Quarterback Eric Crouch, who could be expected to put a positive spin on things, explained part of the problem was game circumstances.

"We were at the 50 or closer against Cal, and had so many big plays, there wasn't a need for long drives and a lot of rushing yards," he said. "Against Southern Miss, we had terrible field position, and we stopped ourselves with five turnovers. That's five drives that stopped because we lost the ball. We didn't play that terribly, but there were reasons we didn't play that good, and mistakes were the key."

The silver lining to Nebraska's early-season struggles to put up big rushing numbers might be that the offensive line has seen just about every defensive-front look possible. Now, it's a matter of going out and executing.

And if it's up to the offensive line, the Huskers will continue trying to pound away at defenses.

"I don't know how it is at other universities, but here, if you're running the ball successfully that means you're doing a good job," said senior tackle Adam Julch. "You're getting your people down. You're controlling the line of scrimmage. And when you have to pass the ball, sometimes it means you're not."

"Sometimes you have to. But it's a slap in the face when you have to pass because you can't run the ball because of your offensive line."

To Julch, football is fun because of its physical nature. But some of that is taken away when the Husker linemen go into pass-protection mode.

"Run blocking is more fun. You get to hit, and you get to hit harder," he added. "That's football."

So how does Julch look at situations that call for more passing?

He goes about those duties with the same kind of vigor — albeit reluctantly.

"Last year, we passed the ball well, and we're passing the ball well this year," he said. "I think it adds to our game, more than anything. Sooner or later, people are going to have to recognize that we can pass the ball, too, and start worrying about that. And then that will open up our running game. So, it's just a matter of where they want to give up the yards. And it really doesn't matter to us which way we do it. Running the ball is more fun

for us."

At Nebraska, it's a way of life that's not likely to change in the near future.

No matter what happens the rest of the season against run-specializing defenses like Oklahoma State, Texas A&M and Kansas State, the Huskers' offensive success will still be determined primarily by how many steps everyone is taking forward, not how effectively people can backpedal.

"We haven't lost confidence," maintained offensive guard Russ Hochstein. "Next week could be the week we go out and, as they used to say around here, punish somebody with 400 yards of rushing and not even worry about the passing game." ■



Nebraska Coach Frank Solich is not ready to give up on the running game.

Curt McKeever is a sportswriter, covering the University of Nebraska for the Lincoln Journal Star. In addition to reporting on football he is the primary beat writer for the men's basketball and baseball teams.

Cowboys Miss Injured Lindsay

After almost pulling off upset in 1998, OSU faces Nebraska without starting QB

OKLAHOMA ST. (2-1) VS NEBRASKA (4-0)



Oct. 2, 1999 • 11:30 a.m. (CDT) • Fox
• Memorial Stadium • Lincoln, Neb.

It came down to one play. One foot.

Oklahoma State needed to make the play and gain the foot. Cowboy quarterback Tony Lindsay had spiked the ball to stop the clock on first-and-goal from inside the Nebraska 1-yard line with five seconds remaining and the Cornhuskers holding on to a 24-17 lead.

Oklahoma State looked disorganized, as an additional blocker raced onto the field late.

OKLAHOMA ST.

Record 2-1

| | | |
|------|---------------|----------|
| S 4 | La.-Lafayette | W, 24-7 |
| S 11 | Tulsa | W, 46-9 |
| S 18 | @ Miss. St. | L, 29-11 |
| O 2 | @ Nebraska | |
| O 9 | Texas Tech | |
| O 23 | Kansas St. | |
| O 30 | @ Texas A&M | |
| N 6 | Texas | |
| N 13 | Kansas | |
| N 20 | @ Baylor | |
| N 27 | @ Oklahoma | |

NEBRASKA

Record 4-0

| | | |
|------|-----------------|----------|
| S 4 | @ Iowa | W, 42-7 |
| S 11 | California | W, 45-0 |
| S 18 | So. Mississippi | W, 20-13 |
| S 25 | @ Missouri | W, 40-10 |
| O 2 | Oklahoma St. | |
| O 9 | Iowa St. | |
| O 23 | @ Texas | |
| O 30 | @ Kansas | |
| N 6 | Texas A&M | |
| N 13 | Kansas St. | |
| N 26 | @ Colorado | |

Lindsay took the snap, just before the play clock expired, and handed the ball to tailback Nathan Simmons, who had already carried 25 times.

There was to be no overtime, however, as Nebraska rush end Mike Rucker overpowered the tight end and stopped Simmons in his tracks, preserving the victory for the second-ranked Huskers.

That game, a Cowboy home game, had been moved to Kansas City's Arrowhead Stadium, and it was apparent from the start that Nebraska was not going to run away with their 23rd straight victory in the series. The Huskers needed a field goal with 1:06 remaining in the second quarter to produce a 3-3 halftime tie.

But Nebraska's streak was not to end on this night, and the narrow loss started a slide for the Cowboys, who lost three straight and five of six to finish 5-6, after a successful 8-4 campaign in 1997 that included a berth in the Alamo Bowl.

STRONG START IN '99

Oklahoma State started the 1999 season with home-field victories over Louisiana-Lafayette and Tulsa, a team the Cowboys lost to a year ago.

But the wheels came off in the third game against Mississippi State Sept. 18 in Starkville, Miss.

In a game OSU thought it could win after manhandling the Bulldogs a year ago — the Cowboys averaged 2.6 yards a play. That included just 81 yards on 42 carries, with the longest rush being a 12-

yard quarterback scramble.

The bad news doesn't stop there. OSU committed six turnovers and Mississippi State's relentless defense came up with six quarterback sacks.

"Our overall running game has not been successful," OSU Coach Bob Simmons said. "Our tailbacks have not touched the ball as much as we'd like."

Some OSU fans think one tailback has touched the ball too much — Simmons' son, Nathan. A fifth-year senior, Nathan Simmons has struggled in his attempt to come back from a knee

Tentative 2 Deeps

NEBRASKA OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|--------|----------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| SE 3 | Matt Davison** | 6-1 | 180 | Jr. |
| 9 | Wilson Thomas | 6-5 | 210 | Fr. |
| LT 69 | Adam Julch*** | 6-5 | 320 | Sr. |
| 66 | Jon Rutherford* | 6-3 | 295 | So. |
| LG 63 | James Sherman*** | 6-4 | 295 | Sr. |
| 77 | Toniui Fonoti | 6-4 | 330 | Fr. |
| C 54 | Dominic Raiola* | 6-2 | 295 | So. |
| 51 | Matt Baldwin** | 6-2 | 285 | Sr. |
| RG 55 | Russ Hochstein** | 6-3 | 280 | Jr. |
| 64 | Steve Alstadt | 6-5 | 275 | So. |
| RT 58 | Dave Volk* | 6-5 | 295 | So. |
| 75 | Kyle Kollmorgen* | 6-5 | 290 | So. |
| TE 85 | T.J. DeBates*** | 6-3 | 250 | Sr. |
| and 87 | Tracey Wistrom | 6-5 | 220 | So. |
| QB 7 | Eric Crouch* | 6-1 | 195 | So. |
| 14 | Jeff Perino* | 6-2 | 210 | Sr. |
| FB 15 | Willie Miller** | 6-1 | 240 | Jr. |
| 35 | Tyrone Uhrir | 6-0 | 230 | Fr. |
| IB 38 | Dan Alexander** | 6-0 | 245 | Jr. |
| 36 | Correll Buckhalter** | 6-0 | 225 | Jr. |
| WB 82 | Sean Applegate** | 5-9 | 185 | Sr. |
| and 12 | Bobby Newcombe** | 6-0 | 195 | Jr. |
| PK 26 | Josh Brown | 6-2 | 185 | Fr. |

NEBRASKA DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---------|--------------------|------|-----|-----|
| LR 81 | Aaron Wills*** | 6-2 | 250 | Sr. |
| 57 | Chris Kelsay | 6-5 | 255 | Fr. |
| NT 96 | Steve Warren*** | 6-2 | 315 | Sr. |
| 70 | Jason Lohr* | 6-2 | 275 | So. |
| DT 91 | Loran Kaiser** | 6-4 | 290 | Jr. |
| 56 | Jeremy Slechte* | 6-6 | 280 | So. |
| RR 83 | Kyle Vanden Bosch* | 6-4 | 270 | Jr. |
| 98 | Demoine Adams | 6-2 | 225 | Fr. |
| SLB 37 | Tony Ortiz*** | 6-1 | 220 | Sr. |
| -or- 46 | Brian Shaw*** | 6-1 | 220 | Sr. |
| MLB 13 | Carlos Polk** | 6-2 | 250 | Jr. |
| 48 | Jamie Burrow* | 6-1 | 235 | So. |
| WLB 50 | Julius Jackson*** | 6-1 | 240 | Sr. |
| 9 | Mark Vedral* | 5-11 | 210 | So. |
| LCB 3 | Keyuo Craver* | 5-10 | 190 | So. |
| -or- 5 | DeJuan Groce | 5-10 | 190 | Fr. |
| FS 19 | Clint Finley** | 6-0 | 205 | Jr. |
| 14 | Dion Booker** | 6-1 | 205 | So. |
| ROV 21 | Mike Brown** | 5-10 | 205 | Sr. |
| 25 | Joe Walker** | 5-10 | 195 | Jr. |
| RCB 22 | Ralph Brown*** | 5-10 | 180 | Sr. |
| 18 | Jeff Hemje | 6-0 | 185 | So. |
| P 17 | Dan Hadenfeldt* | 5-11 | 195 | Sr. |

Tentative 2 Deeps

OKLAHOMA STATE DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---------|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| DE 97 | Zak Warner | 6-4 | 270 | Jr. |
| 94 | Juqua Thomas | 6-4 | 235 | Jr. |
| DT 92 | Cortney Mallory | 6-1 | 290 | Sr. |
| 91 | Chris Tyler | 6-2 | 275 | So. |
| DT 90 | Zak Akin | 6-1 | 280 | Jr. |
| 96 | Eric Stevenson | 6-4 | 290 | Sr. |
| DE 58 | Kevin Williams | 6-5 | 235 | Fr. |
| 88 | Sean Barry | 6-4 | 235 | Jr. |
| WLB 51 | Jack Golden | 6-1 | 230 | Sr. |
| 55 | Raymond Cato | 6-1 | 235 | Sr. |
| MLB 7 | Kenyatta Wright | 6-1 | 230 | Sr. |
| -or- 47 | Dwayne Lewis | 6-3 | 220 | So. |
| SLB 32 | Tarrell Knauls | 6-1 | 230 | Sr. |
| 31 | Terrence Robinson | 6-1 | 220 | Fr. |
| LCB 28 | Evan Howell | 6-1 | 175 | Sr. |
| 15 | Marcus Jones | 5-9 | 175 | So. |
| SS 25 | J.B. Flowers | 6-0 | 185 | Sr. |
| 41 | Robbie Gillem | 6-1 | 200 | So. |
| FS 5 | Adam Edwards | 6-0 | 215 | Sr. |
| 8 | Chris Massey | 6-0 | 185 | Fr. |
| RCB 6 | Alvin Porter | 6-0 | 180 | Sr. |
| 22 | Rickian Holmes | 6-1 | 190 | Fr. |
| P 81 | Scott Elder | 6-3 | 195 | So. |

OKLAHOMA STATE OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---------|-----------------|------|-----|-----|
| Z 3 | Ter. Richardson | 5-9 | 180 | Sr. |
| 17 | T.D. Bryant | 5-11 | 180 | Fr. |
| LT 73 | Josh Lind | 6-6 | 280 | Jr. |
| 52 | L. Chamberlain | 6-4 | 340 | Jr. |
| LG 72 | Blaine Cook | 6-3 | 276 | Sr. |
| 64 | Jeff Machado | 6-3 | 275 | So. |
| C 60 | Reynell Lavigne | 6-1 | 285 | Sr. |
| 61 | D.J. Grissom | 6-4 | 325 | So. |
| RG 78 | Adam Davis | 6-4 | 275 | Sr. |
| 68 | Jason Johnson | 6-3 | 275 | So. |
| RT 77 | A. Golembiewski | 6-5 | 290 | Sr. |
| 66 | Bryan Phillips | 6-5 | 285 | So. |
| TE 80 | Khary Jackson | 6-4 | 250 | Sr. |
| 82 | Bryan Blackwood | 6-5 | 250 | Jr. |
| X 19 | Ethan Howell | 6-1 | 175 | Sr. |
| 12 | Cameron White | 6-4 | 180 | Sr. |
| QB 13 | B.J. Tiger | 6-3 | 195 | So. |
| 7 | Ben Bowling | 6-3 | 205 | Fr. |
| TB 1 | Nathan Simmons | 5-10 | 195 | Sr. |
| 2 | Jamaal Fobbs | 5-10 | 180 | Jr. |
| FB 30 | Kevin Brown | 6-1 | 260 | Sr. |
| -or- 48 | Jeremy Halferty | 6-0 | 225 | Sr. |
| PK 14 | Tim Sydes | 6-2 | 195 | Sr. |

PICKS

Brian Hill
Editor

Nebraska 31, Okla. St. 10

The Nebraska offensive line and running game have something to prove. They didn't last year in Kansas City, but they will this year in the friendly confines of Memorial Stadium. Without Tony Lindsay, the Cowboys will struggle against the Blackshirts.

Mike Babcock
Contributing Editor
Nebraska 21, Okla. St. 3

The Cowboys limited Nebraska to its lowest rushing total in more than 20 years with an unexpected defensive alignment. But they aren't likely to fool Nebraska again. In addition, Oklahoma State's offense isn't particularly imposing with quarterback Tony Lindsay ailing. Nebraska should have the best of it.

Terry Douglass
Grand Island Independent
Sports Editor
Nebraska 27, Okla. St. 10

The Cowboys were smelling upset last season at Arrowhead Stadium before the Nebraska defense made its stand. That was last year, and no matter who is playing quarterback for OSU, Memorial Stadium will be anything but a neutral site. The Pokes should've cashed in on last year's opportunity. The Huskers won't get caught off guard this time.

Tony Allen
O-State Sports Report
Editor
Nebraska 21, Okla. St. 19

It'll be a tight one with no offensive touchdowns, but probably one defensive touchdown for each team. Anger from last year's near-miss will push OSU over the edge with a safety. The sea of Red sits silently staring at Solich for two hours after the game.

injury that required major reconstructive surgery in the offseason.

Those disgruntled Cowboys' supporters think junior Jamaal Fobbs and sophomore Reggie White should get more carries. But Bob Simmons, who has taken a larger role this season in calling offensive plays, has continued to start his son.

Other critics believe Simmons' expanded role on the offensive side of the ball is the reason the Cowboys have become predictable and conservative.

"Running the football, that's what we've been successful with during my years here," said Simmons, in his fifth season at OSU. "Do I want to be more open? Yes, but not at the expense of what your offense is all about."

"We ran the ball last year, and we have to get back to it."

REPLACING LINDSAY

Probably the biggest problem with the offense has been replacing the injured Lindsay, who had more than 2,000 yards in total offense as a sophomore.

Lindsay, a redshirt junior from Denver, Colo., suffered the injury to his left knee in the second quarter of Oklahoma State's 24-7 win over Louisiana-Lafayette and was expected to miss four weeks. He suffered a torn MCL (medial collateral ligament) and a stretched ACL (anterior cruciate ligament).

The injury has been treated non-surgically by placing the knee in a brace and reevaluating after the four-week period.

The week after Lindsay was injured, OSU was encouraged by the play of backups B.J. Tiger and Ben Bowling in the win over Tulsa. But the two young quarterbacks acted their age against Mississippi State, combining to lose four fumbles. Tiger, a sophomore who played cornerback last season, lost fumbles on OSU's first two possessions. A true freshman, Bowling coughed it up the Pokes' fourth drive.

"B.J. is not as polished as we want him to be, and the same goes for Ben," Simmons said. "They are both young and want to do well. They both have tendency, because of their eagerness to do well, to make mistakes."

"We have this week to get them ready to play and to understand that they don't have to do it all by themselves. The urgency on offense is to flat-out execute. No matter how you cut it, you can't lay the ball on the ground."

OSU supporters were hoping for a quick return by Lindsay after the three-year starter was seen throwing passes in practice. But Simmons said he isn't certain when the Denver native will return, and the Cowboys miss his experience.

"Tony is a big leader," Simmons said. "Once we called a play, he's a guy who we knew would put things in order for us."



Sophomore quarterback B.J. Tiger filled in nicely for the injured Tony Lindsay in the first two games.

DEFENSE CONTRIBUTES

OSU's stellar defense has scored twice this season and already has five interceptions on the year.

Defensive tackle Cortney Mallory was the only Cowboy to find the end zone in the loss to Mississippi State, when he grabbed the first interception of his career and returned it 46 yards for his first touchdown ever.

Mallory, a 6-1, 300-pound senior, may have to continue his big-play potential with the Cowboys offense struggling as it is.

Linebacker Kenyatta Wright suffered a hairline fracture in his left hand and is questionable because he might have to have screws inserted.

SIMMONS GETS EXTENSION

The Board of Regents of Oklahoma State University approved earlier in September a contract extension that will keep Simmons as the school's head football coach through the year 2005.

The extension will cover seven years, including the current season.

"Our goal with football at Oklahoma State is to develop a consistent, winning program with integrity and one in which our student-athletes graduate," said OSU Athletics Director Terry Don Phillips.

"In order to accomplish this, we have to have stable leadership. I am delighted we have Bob Simmons as our head football coach, and this extension further stabilizes our program."

Simmons is in his fifth season at OSU. He was the 1997 Big 12 Conference Coach of the Year. ■

Offense Shows Its Stuff

No miracles needed this time; Huskers romp to 40-10 victory

**Story by Mike Babcock
Photos by L.G. Patterson**

This time there were no last-second heroics, no catch with regulation time expired.

There was no debate or controversy regarding rules interpretations at the end, no questions about whether the ball was kicked or was not. There was no overtime period, no high drama.

And there will be no Espys awarded for anything that occurred.

This time the game was as mundane as the one here two years ago was exciting.

OK. Mundane is a bit much. But there wasn't a lot of edge-of-your-seat suspense in Nebraska's 40-10 victory against Missouri before a sellout crowd of 68,174 at Faurot Field.

The energy generated by the Cornhuskers' first visit to Faurot Field since the unforgettable 1997 game was quickly short-circuited by a Missouri team that seemed bent on self-destruction.

A couple of center snaps over the punter's head, a pass interception, and Nebraska could focus on regaining some confidence in an offense that had been sorely missed for two games.

"I think this team was just ready to explode, especially offensively," said Cornhusker split end Matt Davison, who caught five passes for 59 of the Cornhuskers' 476 total yards.

One of the five went for the second touchdown of his career.

The first, of course, led to the overtime in 1997.



"It's a little bit of a load off my back," he said.

Nebraska's offensive production should have taken a bit of a load off Coach Frank Solich's back. The Cornhuskers struggled offensively in victories against California and Southern Mississippi.

"Things seemed to mesh better than they have been," Solich admitted.

Quarterback Eric Crouch was responsible for much of that, completing 10-of-17 passes for 143 yards and two touchdowns and rushing for 92 yards and one touchdown.

His second touchdown pass was perfectly thrown to wingback Bobby Newcombe, who took it in stride to complete the 53-yard scoring play. His touchdown run was a



Nebraska split end Matt Davison (3) jumps into Tracey Wistrom's arms, and Adam Julch (right) joins the celebration after Davison caught a 7-yard touchdown pass from Eric Crouch in the first quarter. It was Davison's first touchdown since the flea-kicker two years ago in the same end zone that sent the 1997 game into overtime.

31-yarder.

"There's no question that Eric played very well," said Solich. "He threw the ball extremely well and ran the option to near perfection. He had a lot to do with our offensive success."

So did Nebraska's willingness to pass. The Cornhuskers' first play from scrimmage was a 25-yard pass from Crouch to Davison, and they followed

with two more in the next four plays.

By halftime, Crouch had thrown 12 passes, two more than he threw the entire game against Southern Mississippi, a fact that no doubt influenced Missouri's preparation. "Offensively, we probably did a few more things to open it up, and maybe got them off-balance a little bit," Solich said.

That, in turn, proved to be a big boost to Nebraska's running game, which produced 333 yards, 100 more than it had produced in the last two games combined.

Junior I-back Correll Buckhalter came off the bench to rush for 132 yards, on only 14 carries. "Correll played what I thought was an excellent football game for us," said Solich.



Missouri quarterback Kirk Farmer is wrapped up for a sack by Nebraska's DeMoine Adams (left) and Steve Warren. Adams, a red-shirt freshman, and Warren, a senior, each had a sack, and the Huskers finished with five.

To be kind, which Missouri coach Larry Smith was not, it wasn't an excellent game for the Tigers. "We stunk," Smith said. "It was embarrassing, and we were responsible for it."

"Offense, defense and special teams all stunk. You can't play Nebraska like that."

To clarify what Smith meant, Missouri's first two possessions ended with the center snap sailing over the head of punter Vince Sebo on fourth-down plays. The first time, Sebo managed to chase down the ball and bat it out of his own end zone for a safety.

The second, he threw a desperation pass out of bounds to avoid being tackled for a big loss, but giving Nebraska possession at the Tigers' 35-yard line.

Five plays later, Crouch passed to Davison for the touchdown.

"I didn't run a very good route," Davison said. "Eric threw an excellent pass."

Linebacker Julius Jackson, who scored two touchdowns against Southern Mississippi, set up the Cornhuskers' second touchdown with a pass interception late in the first

quarter.

Jackson also recovered a fumble late in the third quarter to set up Nebraska's next-to-last touchdown. "I guess I've just got those magnet hands," Jackson said with a smile.

He and the other Blackshirts certainly seemed to be attracted to the ball. Missouri managed only 174 yards, including 25 rushing. Tiger tailback DeV Vaughn Black, who went into the game as the nation's fourth-leading rusher (averaging 172.5 yards per game), was limited to 39 yards on 13 carries.

(Missouri's rushing net included a minus-35 yards for the first bad center snap.)

Nebraska didn't do anything exotic defensively, according to Jackson.

"We didn't come with that many blitzes," he said. "We stuck with our basic defense."

Smith alternated quarterbacks Kirk Farmer and Jim Dougherty, trying to generate some offense. But the Tigers managed only a field goal, following a fumble by I-back Dan Alexander lost at the Nebraska 31-yard line, until late in the game, when the Cornhusker reserves were on the field.

Missouri's touchdown came on a 26-yard pass with 2:13 remaining. By then, it seemed, the stands were devoid of a majority of the Tiger fans, who had come with such great expectations.

Such defensive performances have been the norm this season, however, so much of the post-game focus was on the revitalized offense. Even though Nebraska went into the game ranked 25th in the nation in rushing, "we're a running team, always have been. That's what we're all about," said Crouch.

Nevertheless, opponents need to "back off and know we can throw the ball."

In the previous two games, the Cornhuskers contributed to their offensive problems with mistakes, particularly turnovers and penalties. "We've been our own worst enemy at times," Solich said.

Nebraska still made mistakes. It was penalized seven times for 70 and fumbled five times, although only one of the fumbles was lost, leading to the Missouri field goal.

Still, the 30-point victory was reason for optimism.

"I don't know if I was surprised by the score," said Davison. "I think we can do this to any team if we execute. We feel like we can do this every week."

Even so, "I think our confidence really needed a boost," he said. "We were racking up yards on offense. This is the kind of football we have to play to win a national championship."

The Cornhuskers were on their way to a national championship the last time they visited Missouri. If not for Davison's catch, however, their hopes would have ended in the north end zone.

That was the same end zone in which he caught the touchdown pass on Saturday.

But it wasn't nearly as dramatic this time. ■

4TH & 1 INCHES

Notes And Quotes From The Missouri Game

YOUTH WILL BE SERVED

Nebraska's 70-player travel roster included five true freshmen: offensive guard Toniui Fonoti, rover Taylor Gehman, deep snapper John Garrison, fullback Judd Davies and I-back Chris Butler, a walkon from Hoover, Ala. Travel rosters for Big 12 games have been expanded this season, from 66 the first three seasons. "Every little bit helps," said Cornhusker coach Frank Solich. "Sixty-six leaves you thin."

"This is certainly a move in the right direction."

Fonoti, Gehman and Garrison were the only true freshmen to play in the game, and in all likelihood will be the only ones to play this season, barring injury problems.

"You're starting to get to the point where it may not make much sense to go longer with this, but we're still contemplating (playing) a couple (of true freshmen) at this point," Solich said.

Garrison is among five Cornhuskers from Missouri. He's from Blue Springs. The others are I-back Dan Alexander (Wentzville), tight end Tracey Wistrom (Webb City), nose tackle Steve Warren (Springfield) and rush end Spencer Owen (Carrollton).

Owen, also a true freshman, is redshirting and did not make the trip.

By way of comparison, Missouri has used five true freshmen this season: linebacker Sean Doyle, free safety Gary Anthony, cornerback Terrence Curry, wide receiver Terrence Garvin and fullback Joe Chirumbolo. Things look good for the future at Missouri, according to Solich.

DAVISON'S STREAK CONTINUES

Matt Davison, whose dramatic touchdown reception at Faurot Field two seasons ago enabled the Cornhuskers to escape with a 45-38 overtime win, extended his streak of consecutive games in which he has caught at least one pass to 20.

Davison didn't catch a pass the week after the Missouri game, against Iowa State. He began the streak at Colorado. He wasted little time extending the streak, catching an Eric Crouch for a 25-yard game on Nebraska's first play from scrimmage. He caught four more passes, including a 7-yarder from Crouch for the Cornhuskers' first touchdown with 5:48 remaining in the first quarter.

DEFENSE CONCERNS MISSOURI COACH

Missouri Coach Larry Smith was concerned about his defense going into the game. The Tigers allowed 62 points in their first two games, against Alabama-Birmingham and Western Michigan.

Defense was considered a strength going into the season. "I think the defense right now is a little frustrated because they feel that they should be doing better, particularly against the score," Smith said early in the week.

OTHER NOTABLES

— Nebraska and Missouri had never played each other in the month of September, in a series that began in 1892, at Omaha. The Cornhuskers lead the series 58-32-3, including a 25-16-2 record in Columbia and the last 12 games at Faurot Field.

— Cornhusker punter Dan Hadenfeldt went into the game ranked second nationally, averaging 48.65 yards per punt. He punted five times, averaging 46.8 yards per punt.

— Missouri had led at halftime in 20 consecutive games, going back to the 1997 season. Nebraska took a 19-3 lead to the locker room at halftime.

— Missouri was looking to go 3-0 to start a season for the first time since 1980. It was not to be.

— Missouri quarterback Jim Dougherty: "Nebraska has a good defense, but we have to take some of the blame. We've got to go back to the drawing board next week and start to rebuild."

— Missouri deep snapper Ben Davidson: "I can't explain what happened. But the team rallied behind me and that gave me the confidence to go back out there and do my job the way I know I can."

— Missouri has only one Nebraskan on its roster, junior defensive end Barry Mazuch, who's from Madison and played at Norfolk High School. He plays on the Tigers special teams.

— The game was the Cornhuskers' second this season on natural grass.

— The victory was Nebraska's 21st in a row against Missouri, which last defeated the Cornhuskers at Lincoln. The 35-31 victory was one of three times in the history of the series that an unranked Missouri team pulled an upset of a nationally ranked Nebraska team. The 21-game winning streak is the longest in the series. ■



I-back Correll Buckhalter is tackled by Missouri's Justin Smith. Buckhalter became the first Husker to rush for 100 yards this season.

Nebraska vs. Missouri Sept. 25, 1999 Columbia, Mo.

Score By Quarters

| | | | | | | |
|----------|----|---|----|---|---|----|
| Nebraska | 16 | 3 | 14 | 7 | — | 40 |
| Nebraska | 0 | 3 | 0 | 7 | — | 10 |

Team Stats

| | NU | MU |
|-----------------------|-------|-------|
| First Downs | 21 | 10 |
| Rushing | 14 | 4 |
| Passing | 6 | 6 |
| Penalty | 1 | 0 |
| Rushing Attempts | 58 | 32 |
| Yards Gained Rushing | 363 | 92 |
| Yards Lost Rushing | 30 | 67 |
| Net Yards Rushing | 333 | 25 |
| Net Yards Passing | 143 | 149 |
| Passes Attempted | 17 | 27 |
| Passes Completed | 10 | 9 |
| Had Intercepted | 1 | 1 |
| Total Plays | 75 | 59 |
| Total Net Yards | 476 | 174 |
| Avg. Gain Per Play | 6.3 | 2.9 |
| Fumbles-Lost | 5-1 | 2-1 |
| Penalties-Yards | 7-70 | 5-26 |
| Punts-Yards | 5-234 | 8-314 |
| Avg. Per Punt | 46.8 | 39.3 |
| Punt Returns-Yards | 6-41 | 2-19 |
| Interceptions-Yards | 1-4 | 1-0 |
| Fumble Returns-Yards | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| Kickoff Returns-Yards | 3-48 | 3-86 |
| Possession Time | 32:49 | 27:11 |

Scoring

N — Team safety
N — Matt Davison 7-yard pass from Eric Crouch (Josh Brown kick)
N — Crouch 31-yard run (Brown kick)
M — Brad Hammerich 47-yard field goal
N — Brown 27-yard field goal
N — Bobby Newcombe 53-yard pass from Crouch (Brown kick)
N — Correll Buckhalter 10-yard run (Brown kick)
N — Dan Alexander 4-yard run (Brown kick)
M — Travis Garvin 26-yard pass from Kirk Farmer (Hammerich kick)
Att. — 68,174
Temp. — 86

Individual Statistics

Nebraska

RUSHING

| Name | Att. | Yds. | YPC | LNG | TD |
|----------------|------|------|-----|-----|----|
| Buckhalter, C. | 14 | 132 | 9.4 | 57 | 1 |
| Crouch, E. | 15 | 92 | 6.1 | 31 | 1 |
| Alexander, D. | 10 | 39 | 3.9 | 12 | 1 |
| Diedrick, D. | 7 | 24 | 3.4 | 6 | 0 |
| Perino, J. | 4 | 17 | 4.3 | 16 | 0 |
| Miller, W. | 4 | 13 | 3.3 | 4 | 0 |
| Uhlir, T. | 3 | 9 | 3.0 | 7 | 0 |
| Newcombe, B. | 1 | 7 | 7.0 | 7 | 0 |

PASSING

| Name | C-A-I | Pct. | Yds. | TD |
|------------|---------|------|------|----|
| Crouch, E. | 10-17-1 | 58.8 | 143 | 2 |

RECEIVING

| Name | No. | Yds. | YPC | LNG | TD |
|---------------|-----|------|------|-----|----|
| Davison, M. | 5 | 59 | 11.8 | 25 | 1 |
| Newcombe, B. | 2 | 55 | 27.5 | 53 | 1 |
| Applegate, S. | 1 | 15 | 15.0 | 15 | 0 |
| Miller, W. | 1 | 10 | 10.0 | 10 | 0 |
| Alexander, D. | 1 | 4 | 4.0 | 4 | 0 |

FIELD GOALS

| Name | Att. | Good | LNG |
|-----------|------|------|-----|
| Brown, J. | 1 | 1 | 27 |

PUNTING

| Name | No. | Yds. | Avg. | LNG |
|----------------|-----|------|------|-----|
| Hadenfeldt, D. | 8 | 234 | 46.8 | 55 |

PUNT RETURNS

| Name | No. | Yds. | YPR | LNG | TD |
|--------------|-----|------|------|-----|----|
| Newcombe, B. | 2 | 27 | 13.5 | 16 | 0 |
| Walker, J. | 4 | 14 | 3.5 | 8 | 0 |

KICKOFF RETURNS

| Name | No. | Yds. | YPR | LNG | TD |
|--------------|-----|------|------|-----|----|
| Stella, R. | 2 | 40 | 20.0 | 24 | 0 |
| Kingston, B. | 1 | 8 | 8.0 | 8 | 0 |

DEFENSE

| Name | UT | AT | TT | FL | Int. | Sacks |
|--------------|----|----|----|------|------|-------|
| Brown, M. | 5 | 2 | 7 | 1-3 | 0 | 0 |
| Polk, C. | 3 | 3 | 6 | 1-2 | 0 | 0 |
| Craver, K. | 4 | 0 | 4 | 1-1 | 0 | 0 |
| Ortiz, T. | 3 | 1 | 4 | 1-7 | 0 | 1-7 |
| Kelsay, C. | 2 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Warren, S. | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2-13 | 0 | 1-7 |
| Kaiser, L. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1-1 | 0 | 0 |
| Brown, R. | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Finley, C. | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Hemje, J. | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Shaw, B. | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Adams, D. | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1-7 | 0 | 1-7 |
| Groce, D. | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Jackson, J. | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1-4 | 0 |
| Wichmann, J. | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1-1 | 0 | 1-1 |
| Smith, J. | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1-4 | 0 | 1-4 |
| Stella, R. | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Walker, J. | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Missouri

RUSHING

| Name | Att. | Yds. | YPC | LNG | TD |
|---------------|------|------|-------|-----|----|
| Black, D. | 13 | 39 | 3.0 | 18 | 0 |
| Gilmore, Z. | 8 | 21 | 2.6 | 5 | 0 |
| Leon, T. | 2 | 6 | 3.0 | 3 | 0 |
| Farmer, K. | 6 | -1 | -0.2 | 9 | 0 |
| Dougherty, J. | 2 | -5 | -2.5 | 2 | 0 |
| Team | 1 | -35 | -35.0 | 0 | 0 |

PASSING

| Name | C-A-I | Pct. | Yds. | TD |
|---------------|--------|------|------|----|
| Farmer, K. | 5-17-1 | 29.4 | 92 | 1 |
| Dougherty, J. | 4-9-0 | 44.4 | 57 | 0 |
| Gilpin, J. | 0-1 | 0.0 | 0 | 0 |

RECEIVING

| Name | No. | Yds. | YPC | LNG | TD |
|-------------|-----|------|------|-----|----|
| Garvin, T. | 3 | 71 | 23.7 | 33 | 1 |
| Wise, K. | 2 | 16 | 8.0 | 9 | 0 |
| Blakley, D. | 1 | 29 | 29.0 | 29 | 0 |
| Ford, B. | 1 | 18 | 18.0 | 18 | 0 |

| | | | | | |
|-------------|---|----|------|----|---|
| Layman, K. | 1 | 14 | 14.0 | 14 | 0 |
| Spencer, E. | 1 | 1 | 1.0 | 1 | 0 |

FIELD GOALS

| Name | Att. | Good | LNG |
|---------------|------|------|-----|
| Hammerich, B. | 1 | 1 | 47 |

PUNTING

| Name | No. | Yds. | Avg. | LNG |
|------------|-----|------|------|-----|
| Gilpin, J. | 7 | 291 | 41.6 | 51 |
| Farmer, K. | 1 | 23 | 23.0 | 23 |

PUNT RETURNS

| Name | No. | Yds. | YPR | LNG | TD |
|-------------|-----|------|-----|-----|----|
| Johnson, A. | 2 | 19 | 9.5 | 19 | 0 |

KICKOFF RETURNS

| Name | No. | Yds. | YPR | LNG | TD |
|------------|-----|------|------|-----|----|
| Rhodes, R. | 3 | 86 | 28.7 | 39 | 0 |

DEFENSE

| Name | UT | AT | TT | FL | Int. | Sacks |
|----------------|----|----|----|------|------|-------|
| Smith, J. | 8 | 5 | 13 | 3-12 | 0 | 1-8 |
| Odum, B. | 8 | 4 | 12 | 1-2 | 0 | 0 |
| Robinson, J. | 5 | 5 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Posey, C. | 4 | 5 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Jones, J. | 2 | 5 | 7 | 0 | 1-0 | 0 |
| Duffy, P. | 2 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Jones, C. | 2 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Doyle, S. | 1 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Erickson, S. | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1-6 | 0 | 1-6 |
| Roberson, A. | 2 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Harden, C. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| McCamy, D. | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Gavins, M. | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| O'Neal, J. | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| McPherson, J. | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Monroe, D. | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Revard, D. | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Crittendon, A. | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Duncan, A. | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Clay, M. | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Marriott, J. | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Jurineack, T. | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1-2 | 0 | 0 |
| Minguucci, P. | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |



L.G. Patterson

Jackson Does It Again

Nebraska linebacker Julius Jackson (50) is tripped up by Missouri's Aaron Crittendon, as teammates Brian Shaw (46) and Loran Kaiser (91) look to block after Jackson intercepted a Missouri pass late in the first quarter. It was Jackson's third interception of the season and set up Eric Crouch's 31-yard touchdown run on the next play. Jackson was last week's Big 12 defensive player of the week after scoring on an interception and a fumble return against Southern Mississippi.



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Line Must Be Ready to Make Adjustments

**Oklahoma State used
'off the wall' defense
in '98 game**

By Mike Babcock

Milt Tenopir knew the Oklahoma State defense was going to present problems even though the Cornhuskers had picked up a first down before being forced to punt.

After that first series in last season's game against the Cowboys, Tenopir called down from the coaches' box at Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City. Dan Young had assembled the interior offensive linemen on the sideline so that Tenopir could ask them about defensive spacing.

With the spacing in mind "we could work on it a little bit," Tenopir said.

That was the plan, as it always is early in a game: Take a look and adjust accordingly.

Much to his surprise, however, only two of the five linemen "could tell us where they (the defenders) were lined up," said Tenopir. The other three responded with blank stares.

"So you know they were thinking: 'Whoa, what is this?'"

An unexpected defensive alignment was what it was.

"I'd never seen anything like it," offensive tackle Adam Julch said, recalling the 24-17 Nebraska victory. "We kind of came out of that first series going: 'What in the world is this?'"

"We had prepared for something, and they came out with a defense we'd never seen."

The situation worsened on the second series as the Cornhuskers scrambled to make sense of what Oklahoma State's defense was doing. Joel Makovicka was stopped for no gain, and Bobby Newcombe was sacked for a 10-yard loss. After an incomplete pass, Nebraska was forced to punt again.

Bill Lafleur would punt six more times, as the Cornhuskers could manage only 12 first downs, including one

by penalty, and a net of 73 yards rushing on 36 carries.

The rushing total was Nebraska's lowest since 1975, when Oklahoma limited the Cornhuskers to 70 yards in a 35-14 victory at Norman. And the offense was pass-oriented then.

In over-simplified terms, Oklahoma did it with speed and superior athletes, while Oklahoma State capitalized on the element of surprise. "You normally have an idea during the course of the week (before a game) exactly what to prepare for, in general at least," Tenopir said.

"But that particular deal there, when they (the Cowboys) came out with something altogether off the wall, you're a little bit shell-shocked when you see it the first few times.

"You don't know how to adjust, partly because of maturity."

Center Josh Heskew was the line's only returning starter. And the ability to deal with the unexpected "just comes with time," said Tenopir. "It comes with how many games you've been in. It comes with poise. When they get a little more mature in the offensive line, those kids show better poise.

"They're not quite so alarmed after they've been through the mill a few times."

Playing in last season's Oklahoma State game certainly qualified as going through the mill.

Oklahoma State defensive coordinator Rob Ryan devised a scheme by which the Cowboys often had Nebraska out-numbered at the point of attack. Ryan committed so many defenders to stopping the inside running game that the Cornhusker blockers couldn't always account for them.

And it wasn't as if Oklahoma State lacked athletes on defense. It ranked 29th in the nation in total defense last season, and 20th against the run, allowing only 119.5 yards per game.

The Cowboys weren't gambling. "What they did was sound," Tenopir said. "But if we would have had a week to prepare, we would have been able to hurt the defense a little easier or a little more."

Preparation is crucial. And every week is different because every



Quarterback Eric Crouch gives instructions to offensive linemen James Sherman (63) and Adam Julch (69).

defense is different, even when the base alignment is the same. Nebraska, for example, runs a 4-3 base defense. But "our 4-3 defense is a heck of a lot different-looking than Florida State's 4-3 defense," said Tenopir.

"Our people are different shades and bluffs and backers, what have you. So it's a 4-3 defense in principle only, meaning you've got four down guys and three linebackers."

Cornhusker defensive coordinator Charlie McBride "can get in about 10 different up-front alignments and still it's a 4-3," Tenopir said. "If you're preparing to play against Charlie's 4-3, you've got to prepare for eight or 10 different looks that he might give you."

Most of the differences aren't readily apparent to untrained observers, however. Subtle changes in the defense can create significant problems for an offensive lineman.

"If a guy's half-a-man different, if he's shaded to the guard or inside shade to the tackle, that changes the whole scheme. Is the guy shading the guard or is he on the inside shade of the tackle? You're talking about a foot, maybe. But it makes a difference on how you're going to block a play," said Tenopir.

Ryan's focus was stopping the run, of course, because Nebraska's offense has been run-oriented since the late 1970s and the Cornhuskers have had remarkable success on the ground.

Nebraska has led the nation in



rushing 11 times since 1980 and has finished no lower than third in all but two of the remaining eight seasons. The Cornhuskers ranked sixth a year ago.

As a result, "a lot of people come up with a 'Nebraska defense,' one they've probably worked on a little bit all through the course of the fall and one they're going to gamble with a little bit, saying: Hey, we've got to put X number of people up there to try to out-match them," Tenopir said.

Opposing defenses also will change the spacing slightly. Last season, "Texas did it. Colorado did it. Kansas State tried to do it but went right back to their original defense after we burned them a couple of times on what they tried to do," said Tenopir. "It goes both ways."

Conference opponents, in particular, might prepare a defense well in advance because "if they haven't truly worked on it over a period of weeks, if they put it in just for our ballgame, and just put it in that week, they're going to have a tough time in four days repping all we do," Tenopir said.

"It's a deal where they've either got to work on it some in fall camp or spend a day a week working on some of it and perfect what they're trying to get done. I'm sure Okie State did that. They didn't throw that defense in four days before the game and say: This is what we're going to do."

The Cowboys' defensive approach for that game "was well thought out." And it worked well enough that Arizona tried something similar defen-

Evaluating Line Can Be Difficult

'We're supposed to do certain things'

Evaluating an offensive lineman's play can be difficult for someone in the stands.

"We've had our fair share of bad games," Adam Julch said. "But sometimes it looks like we're not doing good and we are. Fans don't really understand what our job is."

Julch, a senior co-captain, is Nebraska's starting left offensive tackle. So he can speak with authority on the subject of offensive line play. "We have a pretty complicated scheme," he said.

"And we're supposed to do certain things."

What those things are even his dad isn't always sure. As a result, "my dad doesn't know whether I have a good game or not," said Julch. "He tries to understand. I try to go through it with him."

"But it's complicated, and I don't expect a fan to understand."

In last season's Oklahoma State game, for example, "we graded out real well," he said. "It was one of our better games as far as grades.

But fans would probably say it was one of the worst."

Because most fans base their conclusions on statistics alone.

Oklahoma State used a defense for which the Cornhuskers hadn't prepared, and there was some initial confusion about whom to block. It shouldn't have been a problem, however, "because all of our blocking is rule blocking," Julch said. "On every play we have sort of a rule. It goes through steps."

For example, he might consider a sequence such as this, based on the defensive alignment. "If there's someone in your left seam, then block him," he said. "If there's not somebody in your left seam, then block someone on you. If there's not anybody on you, then block the linebacker."

"And if you don't have any of those three, then you just go hit somebody. They usually don't go any further than three rules. But you have to do something, go for a



Adam Julch is a two-year starter at left tackle.

sively against Nebraska in the Holiday Bowl game.

By then, however, "we had a few ideas of how to attack it," said Tenopir.

Although Nebraska managed only 87 yards rushing against Arizona, Eric Crouch completed 12-of-28 passes for 193 yards and touchdowns to Tracey Wistrom and Shevin Wiggins. Any defense "can take away a portion of your offense," Tenopir said. But that can open up something else.

That was illustrated earlier this season when California committed as many as 10 defenders to stopping Nebraska's inside running game and option pitches. "What it amounted to was, we ended up hurting them with a few things we put in just for their type of pressure defense," Tenopir said.

The linemen were able to adjust

because they had been in similar situations and they had prepared for such a possibility. "When you're not a mature football team, anything they throw at you plumb off the air of what you worked on is going to cause some anxious moments for your kids," he said.

"You have to have a lot of poise. You can't get antsy and let the movement shake you up."

Such situations also are cause for anxiety for a coach.

"We never see the same thing," said Tenopir.

"Each week is a new ball of tricks. I guess that's why it's kind of fun to be an offensive lineman. There's something different every Monday that you have to prepare for."

You just hope that what you prepare for on Monday is what you see on Saturday. ■

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safety or something."

An offensive lineman doesn't go through a checklist in his mind, of course. There wouldn't be time for that. He has to react according to what he sees. "It becomes like instinct," said Julch.

That's accomplished by repeating plays during practice, running the same thing over and over until it becomes second-nature. The process takes time, which is why nearly every offensive lineman sits out a redshirt season and spends a season or two as a backup before becoming a starter.

"It probably took me two years to get it down," Julch said.

Besides knowing what to do, linemen must know how to do it. "Technique is a big part. You can know where you're going, but if you don't use the right technique, you can mess up," he said.

Players don't necessarily learn all the rules, according to offensive line coach Milt Tenopir.

"You try to stress the rule so they aren't alarmed when something comes up that you haven't worked on," he said. "A rule allows you to take care of anything you get."

"That's also the toughest thing for kids to grasp. If they don't have a concept of the play or a good knowledge of football, rules don't make much sense. But after they've been through it a few times, they finally get an idea. We try to teach them on every play what the back is looking for."

"That gives them a concept of: 'Hey, that's why I've got to block this guy, because the back is reading such and such.' So when we teach them, we try to give them the idea of what the guy behind them is reading, what he's expecting on a particular look from you."

Since the freshman season is typically spent on the scout squad, the learning doesn't really begin until that first spring. From then on, however, it's a crash course in a variety of defensive sets.

"We go through 80 snaps a day in practice," said Julch. "That's one thing about this system we have here, the practices are efficient. I mean, I think we run every play we have every day."

Nebraska's offense has multiple looks but so do opposing defenses. "Every team runs a different defense for every set we have," Julch said. "So it gets a little confusing."

And if it gets confusing for the players, imagine how confusing it can be for a fan.

Or Julch's dad, for that matter. ■

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Alexander Active Off the Field

Husker junior I-back on Coaches Association Good Works Team

Most Nebraska football fans know Dan Alexander as the I-back in the fullback's body, the tremendous physical specimen who has yet to reach his potential . . . on the field.

They probably don't know that there's much more to Dan Alexander than a football player who usually runs over or through his opponents instead of around them.

The junior from Wentzville, Mo., may never earn the honors that most think he has the potential to on the field, but he is earning recognition for what he does off the field.

Alexander recently was selected as one of 11 members of the 1999 American Football Coaches Association Good Works Team for Division I-A. The team honors athletes who show exceptional dedication to community service and to the betterment of the communities in which they live.

Alexander was named to the 1997 and 1998 Brook Berringer Citizenship Teams for his involvement in the community. He has been a volunteer at the Peoples City Mission, the Food Distribution Center, St. Elizabeth's Burn Unit and for the Make a Wish Foundation.

In 1998, he was a Husker Ambassador for the athletic department and the keynote speaker for the North Platte "School is Cool" Jam. Currently, he is in his second year as a member of the Student-Athlete Advisory Board and is also a member of Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

"We think that it is a prestigious honor for Dan," Coach Frank Solich said. "He has always been willing to share his time with others and is a great example for youth."

Alexander became the fourth Husker to earn the honor, joining Troy Branch (1992-1993), Donta Jones (1994) and Jared Tomich (1996).

Nominations were submitted to the AFCA by college sports information departments. Nominees had to be actively involved and committed to working with a charitable organization, service group or other communi-



Dan Alexander rushed for 26 yards and a touchdown against Cal.

ty service activities. Athletic ability was not a criteria.

But it certainly could have been with Alexander. After becoming the first freshman to win Nebraska Lifter-of-the-Year honors in 1997, Alexander was again a finalist in 1998. He recorded the highest Performance Index on the team during spring testing. His total of 3,144 points broke his own position record established last year and is the fourth-highest Performance Index score in Nebraska history.

In the past two years, the 6-0, 245-pounder has bettered his 10-yard dash time from 1.74 to 1.62 seconds and his 40 time from 4.68 to 4.53, while gaining 11 pounds of muscle. This spring, he earned 968 points in the 40-yard dash, the most in school history.

His physical conditioning has helped him recover from two serious knee injuries.

After redshirting in 1996, Alexander spent time at both I-back and fullback in the spring of 1997 and was the star of the Spring Game. A few days later, it was determined that he had suffered a torn anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee.

Alexander was back in action just four months after the surgery but saw limited action as a redshirt freshman.

He earned the starting spot at I-back late in his sophomore season, rushing for 110 yards and three touchdowns at Iowa State. But the next week, in his second career start at top-ranked Kansas State, he suffered a right knee strain and had surgery

Nov. 17 to repair the lateral collateral ligament in his right knee.

Another comeback later, Alexander regained the starting spot when DeAngelo Evans abruptly quit the team two games into the 1999 season. Through three games, he was the team's leading rusher with 175 yards. "I think I'm coming along well and I feel like I'm getting better all the time," Alexander said. "But there's still so many things I need to work on to get better each and every week."

In his first start against Southern Mississippi, Alexander rushed 16 times for 54 yards and caught one pass for 27 yards. But he also fumbled twice, stopping Nebraska drives.

"I went back to the sidelines after the fumbles last week, and everyone patted me on the back," he said. "I think the coaches showed a tremendous amount of confidence in me."

Solich agreed.

"We have a lot of faith in Dan," he said. "He's a guy who gives tremendous effort every time he sets foot on the field. I just want to see him continue to improve."

Solich displayed his confidence in Alexander during the week of his first start. Alexander had been bothered by a sprained ankle and missed practice time, but Solich said he expected Alexander to be ready by kickoff.

"Knowing Dan, he'll be 100 percent," Solich said. "He comes off of injuries faster than any human being I've ever seen. We've kind of gotten to where we expect that of him." ■

Nebraska Has Own 'Mr. Inside, Outside'

*Francis, Cardwell give Cornhuskers
pair of threats in backfield in '34-36*

By Mike Babcock

Doc Blanchard was "Mr. Inside" and Glenn Davis was "Mr. Outside," nicknames bestowed on them by George Trevor, football editor of the New York Sun. They were teammates at Army, and both won the Heisman Trophy, Blanchard in 1945 and Davis in 1946, after finishing second twice.

During their three seasons, Army was undefeated and won two national championships.

A decade earlier, Nebraska had its own "Mr. Inside" and "Mr. Outside." But they didn't attract the media attention that came with playing college football in the eastern United States, and though the teams for which they played were successful, they were certainly not national champions.

The Cornhuskers in question were Sam Francis, "Mr. Inside," and Lloyd Cardwell, "Mr. Outside," backfield mates from 1934 to 1936, on teams coached by Hall of Famer D.X. Bible.

Francis, a fullback, was the most publicized of the two, earning consensus All-America honors and finishing second to Yale's Larry Kelley in voting for the Heisman Trophy in 1936.

He also was a conference champion in the shot put and discus, and an NCAA champion in the shot put, both indoor and outdoor. He finished fourth in the shot put at the Berlin Olympics.

Francis was an outstanding multi-sport high school athlete in tiny Oberlin, Kan., and a good enough basketball player that legendary Kansas basketball coach Phog Allen recruited him.

In fact, he had already moved into a dorm at Kansas when Henry Schulte, Nebraska's track coach and a football assistant at the time, persuaded him to change his mind and become a Cornhusker.

Schulte and Francis had met at



Sam Francis (left) was "Mr. Inside," and Lloyd Cardwell was "Mr. Outside."

a national high school track and field meet, held in conjunction with the Chicago World's Fair in 1933. Francis, of course, won the shot put competition there.

His success in the shot put reflected the brute force with which he played football. He could be so dominating that after Nebraska's 19-6 loss at perennial power Pittsburgh in 1936, Henry McLeMORE of the United Press wrote: "Francis stood out like a stilt-walker at a midgets' convention."

When opposing defenses tried to stop Francis inside, that opened up the outside for Cardwell, whose remarkable accomplishments were to some degree overshadowed by his famous teammate.

Schulte also was instrumental in recruiting Cardwell, who competed on the track and field team in the sprints, hurdles, jumps and javelin. He combined that athleticism with power.

Cardwell was bigger than the average Cornhusker lineman, standing 6-foot-3 and weighing around 200 pounds. Bible's teams were never overly big, with linemen averaging about 190 pounds.

His running style captured the imagination of Omaha World-Herald sports editor Frederick Ware, who nicknamed him "Wild Hoss," explaining: "It's his roaring, tearing, gay freebooting way that reminds me of the defiant, joyous speeding wild horse on the prairie that loves to run with the wind."

Cardwell had a sense of symmetry, breaking long runs for touchdowns in his first game at Nebraska, against Wyoming in

Huskers Illustrated Team of the Decade, 1930-39

| | |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| End | Steve Hokuf (1929-30-32) |
| End | Elmer Dohrmann (1935-36-37) |
| Line | Charles Brock (1936-37-38) |
| Line | Fred Shirey (1935-36-37) |
| Line | Hugh Rhea (1929-30-31) |
| Line | Lawrence Ely (1930-31-32) |
| Line | Elmer Greenberg (1927-28-29-30) |
| Back | George Sauer (1931-32-33) |
| Back | Lloyd Cardwell (1934-35-36) |
| Back | Sam Francis (1934-35-36) |
| Back | Bernie Masterson (1931-32-33) |
| Kicker | Bernie Masterson (1931-32-33) |

1934, and in his last game as a Cornhusker, against Oregon State in 1936.

In between, he thrilled Nebraska fans with his game-breaking speed and his physical style, sometimes using the ball to stiff-arm would-be tacklers, much to the chagrin of Bible.

He played safety on defense with the same abandon, and he had an aversion to practice, often showing up late, also to the chagrin of his coach. But, wrote John Bentley a Lincoln sportswriter who would later become Nebraska's sports information director, "when the chips were down he could run."

He never ran better than in the opener his junior season, when the University of Chicago came to Memorial Stadium. The Maroons featured halfback Jay Berwanger, who would earn the first Heisman Trophy at season's end. But that afternoon, the trophy would have gone to Cardwell.

Berwanger scored the first touchdown, and the only one his team would get. Cardwell returned the ensuing kickoff 87 yards for a touchdown and added two more in a 28-7 victory.

Cardwell was a three-time, first-team all-conference selection, but he never earned All-America honors, during a decade that produced five other All-Americans besides Francis.

And one of those five, like Francis, was a consensus pick as a fullback — George Sauer.

Sauer came to Nebraska from Lincoln High, following his coach, W.H. Browne, who was hired by Bible as an assistant in 1930. After the Cornhuskers lost at Pittsburgh 6-0 in 1933, the Associated Press reported that the Panthers considered him "the best backfield man (they) encountered."

He was a "quick thinking, high stepping" ball carrier, according to the report.

His ability to think quickly and act was illustrated in a 16-7 victory against Oklahoma in 1933.

Nebraska faced a fourth down deep in Oklahoma territory, leading 13-7. Though Bernie Masterson, the regular kicker, was on the sideline, Sauer announced in the huddle that the Cornhuskers would attempt a field goal, hoping to increase their lead and give them some breathing room.

Jerry LaNoue, Masterson's back-up, wanted to know who was going to kick it. Sauer, who had never kicked a field goal in competition, said he would. He did, and the 16-7 score held up.

"Everyone figured George was faking a kick and would pass, not knowing that he could beat them as a place-kicker," Bentley wrote in the next day's edition of the Lincoln Evening Journal.

The Oklahoma victory was the fourth in a six-game winning streak to begin the 1933 season. Had the Cornhuskers won their remaining three games, they might well have been headed to the Rose Bowl. They won the last two, but the 6-0 loss at Pittsburgh delayed their trip to Pasadena, Calif.

Pittsburgh was a constant source of consternation to Nebraska, which had a 1-7-2 record against the Panthers during the 1930s, with the only victory coming in 1939, after Bible had left for Texas.

Even so, Bible's teams had a combined record of 50-15-7 (including 1929). He brought stability to the non-conference schedule and coached Nebraska to six conference titles.

His final team in 1936 won seven of nine games and finished ninth in the first Associated Press poll, after reaching a ranking of No. 6 before the 19-6 loss at No. 5-ranked Pittsburgh.

That team included two players besides Francis who would earn All-America honors as seniors, tackle Fred Shirey (1937) and center Charles Brock

(1938). The other Cornhusker All-Americans during the 1930s also were linemen, tackle Hugh Rhea (1930) and center Lawrence Ely (1932).

Shirey, Brock and end Steve Hokuf all were three-time, first-team all-conference picks, while Elmer Dohrmann, the other end, earned more varsity letters (11) than any Cornhusker, before or since. In addition to lettering in football, he lettered in basketball, baseball and track.

Rhea, who went from third-string center to being an All-American in one season, was the NCAA outdoor shot put champion in 1932, after finishing third in 1931.

All of those on the all-decade team except Masterson and Rhea were chosen to play in the annual East-West Shrine all-star game, with Sauer scoring both touchdowns in a 12-0 West victory in 1934.

Despite the effects of the Great Depression, the Cornhuskers enjoyed great success during the 1930s. The departure of Bible, who was hired away for a 10-year contract worth \$15,000 per year, was a major disappointment for Nebraska fans. But that disappointment would turn to euphoria with a trip to the Rose Bowl under his successor, Lawrence McCeney "Biff" Jones, to begin the next decade. ■

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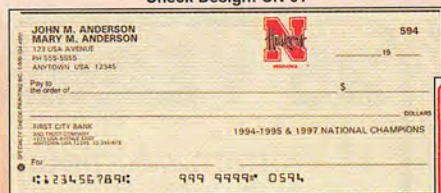
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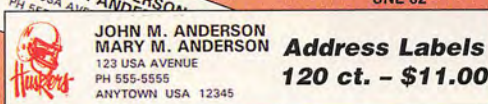
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No More Leftovers

**Former player, assistant
Noth saw changes
in women's program**

Cathy Noth and her Nebraska volleyball teammates imagined steak being served at the football team's training table while they ate leftovers at the cafeteria in the Harper-Schramm-Smith residence hall complex.

After the dorm students finished, the volleyball team was served.

"We ate some odd things," Noth said recently.

No one really complained, however. They were grateful for what they had, an opportunity to compete at the collegiate level. "That's all we wanted to do," said Noth. "We just wanted to play."

In order to do that, the players had to pitch in before and after home matches at the Coliseum. They had to set up the net and haul out the wooden folding chairs at courtside for the small but enthusiastic crowds the matches attracted. Afterward, they had to take down the net and the chairs.

"We just wanted to get out of there," she said.

But if they didn't spend 45 minutes to an hour cleaning up, no one else would.

That was the price women athletes paid in the early to mid-1980s. And that's why Noth has been quick to remind those who have followed to appreciate what they've been given.

"I got grumpy with them if they were taking things for granted," she said.

Noth, who played from 1981 to 1984, could do that as an assistant to Coach Terry Pettit for 10 years. And she can do it now, despite going into private business following last season.

Many former Huskers remain involved in the program, if only emotionally. As a result, "our players have a lot of respect for what has taken place before them," Noth said.

"Former players are always coming back to remind them."

There wasn't a lot that had taken place in the Nebraska volleyball program when Noth arrived in the fall of 1981, following a successful multi-sport high school career in Bettendorf, Iowa.



Cathy Noth was a Nebraska assistant volleyball coach for 10 years.

She had yet to settle completely on volleyball as her college sport, considering softball as well and planning to play both. She was certainly good enough to play both.

When she was recruited, the NCAA had yet to take over governance of women's sports. That was done by the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (IAIW).

Recruiting was handled much differently under the IAIW. "Rarely would you have a coach come to your home," said Noth, who considered Iowa and Creighton in addition to Nebraska.

"Terry saw me play and asked me for a visit."

She and her father made the trip to Lincoln at their own expense, but were allowed to stay at the Nebraska Center for Continuing Education on the East Campus during the visit.

While she was in Lincoln, she worked out with the team, a significant difference in the recruiting rules and an experience that influenced her decision to come to Nebraska. "I could see that I was a good enough athlete and that my volleyball skills would come along with Terry's coaching," she said.

Had she picked Creighton, things would have worked out much differently.

When she was a freshman, Creighton dropped its volleyball program.

Though she still planned to play softball, Noth was persuaded by Pettit to wait a year before trying to play both sports. And by the end of her first

25 YEARS

of Women's Athletics

In celebration of 25 years of women's athletics at Nebraska, Huskers Illustrated is featuring stories with Husker women student-athletes from the late 1970s and 1980s, remembering the way things were and discussing how things have changed.

season, she was focused on volleyball.

She had always had a special affection for volleyball. "Ever since I was a little kid, I wanted to be on the Olympic team," said Noth. "I wrote that down when I was in elementary school.

"To me, that was the ultimate athletic accomplishment."

Noth arrived at Nebraska as an outside hitter but was moved to setter as a junior and earned All-America honors twice. She was a three-time all-conference pick, on teams that had a combined record of 112-24 and made three NCAA Tournament appearances in her four seasons.

She was Nebraska's first three-time all-conference honoree, and she was the only volleyball player in Big Eight history to be chosen MVP of the conference tournament three times.

After finishing at Nebraska, she spent four years on the U.S. national team.

She also achieved her childhood goal, serving as an alternate for the 1988 Olympic team.

Noth has seen dramatic changes in women's intercollegiate volleyball, and women's intercollegiate athletics in general, of course. When she played at Nebraska, Pettit regularly had to chase basketball players in pickup games off the courts at the Coliseum before practices.

"I was still doing that five or six years ago," Noth said.

That's no longer a problem. The Coliseum has been refurbished and turned into the volleyball team's home, as well as home to offices for many other women's sports.

"The facilities and the locker room, the sponsorships and the money coming in, we didn't have those things," said Noth. "We just competed."

And ate leftovers at the training table. ■

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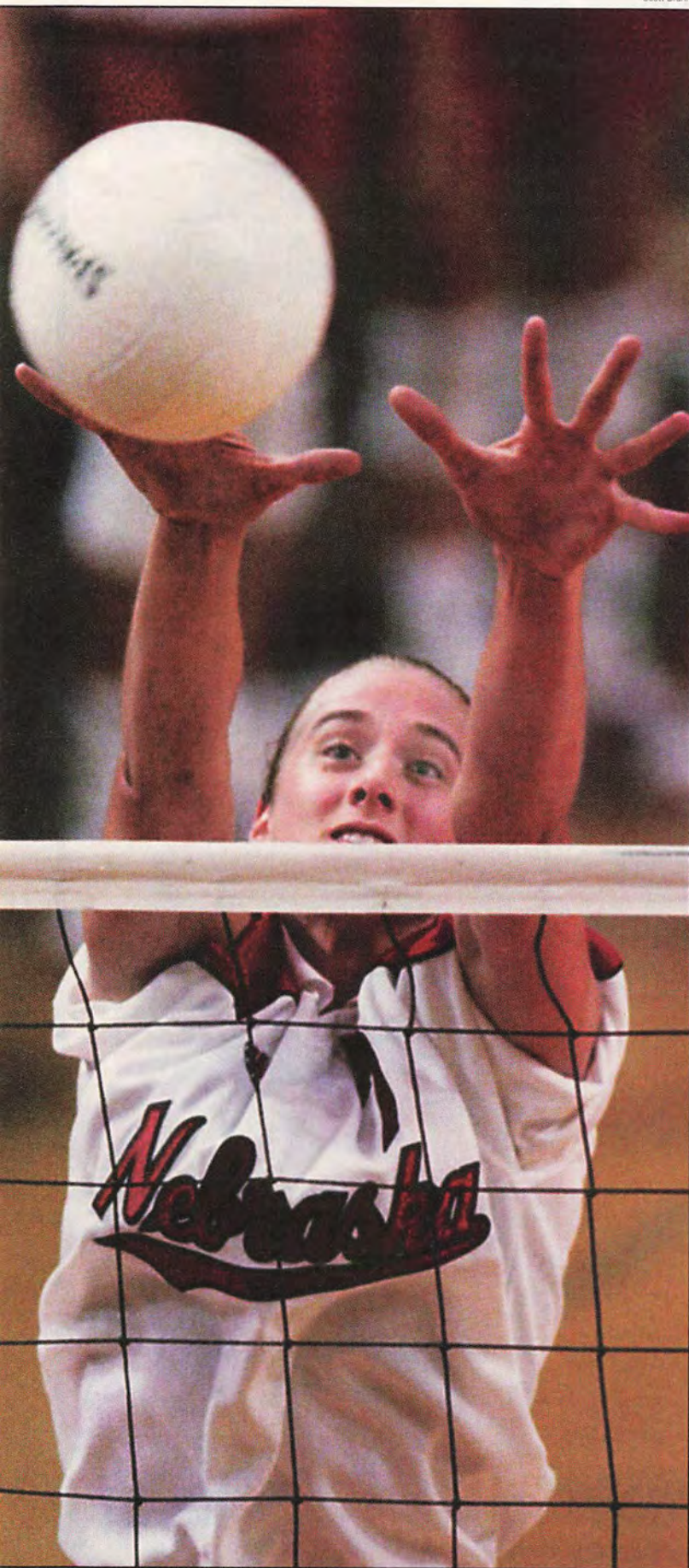
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At Her Best When It's **Crunch Time**

*Meendering
continues Husker
right-side tradition*

By Todd Henrichs

Her kills sometimes look effortless, but when it's crunch time, expect the Nebraska volleyball team to make every effort to get Nancy Meendering the ball.

The junior All-American from Hull, Iowa, has continued the tradition of Nebraska fielding the best right-side players in the country.

Since starting her first match last season, Meendering has been NU's go-to player. She's recorded double-figure kills in 30 of 43 starts, including 27 of the last 32. She has 16 or more kills in 15 of the last 22 matches.

"The setters know when she is on a roll, when she's got the hot hand," senior teammate Nikki Henk said. "So they get her the ball."

And Meendering usually produces. Just ask nationally ranked Wisconsin, which saw Meendering completely take over its match with the Huskers earlier this season.

When NU mounted a Game 3 rally to complete a

As a sophomore, Nancy Meendering became Nebraska's go-to player, and the All-American has continued her outstanding play this season.

sweep of the Badgers, Meendering was the driving force. Nebraska won 18 of the final 28 rallies, nine on Meendering kills. She produced 29 kills on 67 attacks against Penn State earlier this year, just missing the fourth 30-kill match of her still-young career.

After every match, you hear the same thing from opposing coaches: "We had no answer," they say.

Like any good left-hander with a wicked fastball, Meendering was called upon a lot last season.

It was only her first year as a starter, but Meendering was easily the ace of Nebraska's hitting corps a year ago. She reared back and delivered 1,233 times, fourth-most in school history. Divided into games played, her swings rank third on Nebraska's all-time list.

Coming off a 32-2 season in which NU made it to the national semifinals, Nebraska Coach Terry Pettit knows he can count on Meendering to produce in clutch situations. But like any good baseball manager, Pettit is looking for some outstanding relievers, players whose job will be to keep the opponents honest.

"We're not on a pitch count," Pettit said, "but we need to have a more-rounded offense. We're doing everything we can to develop that."

Meendering, a returning first-team All-American, trained most of the off-season with the U.S. World University Games team. She felt she improved facing international competition and has already shown a better mix of shots this season.

Her international coaches asked Meendering to be that team's go-to player, a role that left her both humbled and inspired. But back at Nebraska, she's not worried about how many sets she'll see, only that the team wins.

"I want our team to be successful," Meendering said. "So if coach says we need to (give me more sets) for our team to be successful, then I'll say 'OK, I'll do that.' If he thinks spreading it out would be better, I'll say 'great, get other people hits.' We've got tons of hitters this year that can put the ball away."

Nebraska had physical players like seniors Megan Korver and Jaime Krondak a year ago but sometimes lacked the additional hammer necessary to beat the scrambling defenses of top teams.

As a result, Meendering took 27 percent of her team's attacks. Over the final nine matches, it was 33 percent, and in the last four, she accounted for

35 percent of her team's swings. She averaged 4.84 kills a game, third best in program history.

Through 10 matches, Meendering had 26 percent of Nebraska's kills and attacks this season, although her .268 hitting percentage was below her mark of 1998.

"The key when you have a dominant attacker is not just the kills she gets but whether or not she sets up other people," Pettit said. "We've seen teams win national championships with players getting five or six kills a game, but the other players on the team have to benefit from what that player does."

Pettit hoped to see more of that this season. Tonia Tauke showed flashes last year, complementing Meendering

with a career-best 15 kills in back-to-back matches against Pepperdine and Wisconsin.

Mandy Monson, Kim Behrends and Angie Oxley — the trio battling for playing time on the left-side, all have the ability to dominate matches as well. All are averaging better than two kills a game this season.

"We've got some heat," Pettit said.

But the coach isn't ready to ask less of Meendering. In fact, she's expected to provide more leadership on the court. Burning a few fastballs down the middle won't hurt, either.

"Any time you're as physical as Meendering is, whether you want to be a leader or not, you are," Pettit said. "We certainly can't afford to lose any of that." ■

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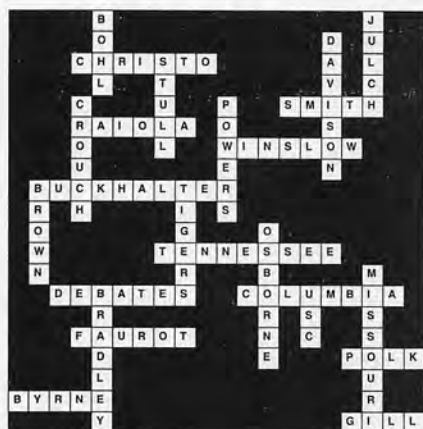


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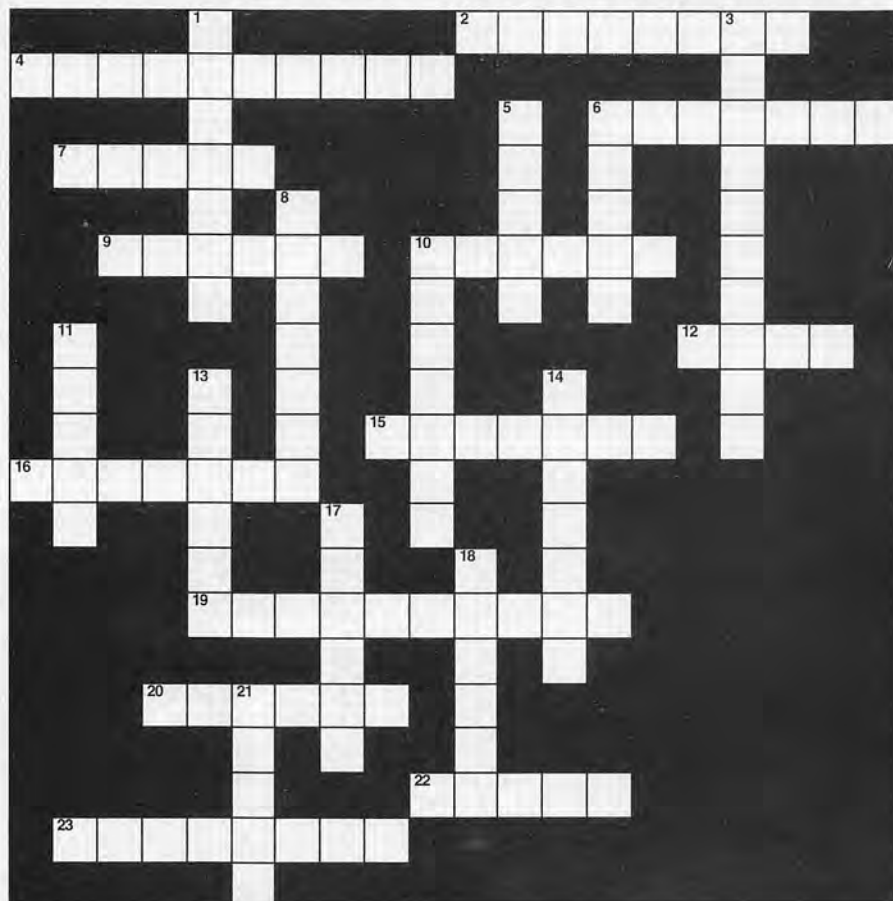
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- 2 1971 national champion
- 4 OSU mascot
- 6 OSU coach 1979-83
- 7 NU leading rusher vs. OSU in '98
- 9 NU 1986 All-America middle guard
- 10 Made game-saving tackle vs. OSU in '98
- 12 NU quarterback coach
- 15 1997 Lombardi Award winner
- 16 OSU head coach
- 19 Oklahoma State location
- 20 Had 73-yard punt return vs. OSU in '98
- 22 NU 1998 leading tackler
- 23 Tom Osborne's college

DOWN

- 1 NU 1998 sack leader
- 3 Location of last year's OSU game
- 5 NU's No. 69
- 6 OSU coach 1984-94
- 8 1988 Heisman Trophy winner

CROSSWORD



- 10 NU 1980 All-America I-back
- 11 NU play-by-play announcer
- 13 OSU all-time leading rusher
- 14 1995 Unitas Award winner

- 17 NU's No. 25
- 18 1997 Outland Trophy winner
- 21 OSU home field

Answers in Oct. 9 issue

This Week in Husker History

September 26

1981 — Penn State's Curt Warner rushes for 238 yards and Brian Franco kicks five field goals in a come-from-behind, 30-24 victory against the Cornhuskers at Memorial Stadium. Nebraska takes a 24-20 lead into the fourth quarter on a pair of Mark Mauer touchdown passes but can't hold it.

September 27

1902 — The Cornhuskers of Coach Walter C. "Bummy" Booth open an undefeated, untied and unscored-upon season by defeating Doane 51-0 in Lincoln. The victory is Nebraska's fourth in a row, in a streak that reaches 24 before ending at Colorado in 1904.

September 28

1991 — Nebraska's defense comes up big, recovering five fumbles, intercepting two passes and sacking Arizona State quarterback Bret Powers four

times in an 18-9 victory against the Sun Devils at Tempe. Cornhusker placekicker Byron Bennett has a tough time. Two of his field goal attempts hit the uprights, minutes apart in the fourth quarter, and two others are blocked by Arizona State.

September 29

1962 — Bob Devaney's first team wins at Michigan 25-13. "During different parts of Nebraska football history, there have been some big upsets. But we felt that to get the program going again, to sell people on what we were doing, we had to beat Michigan," Devaney says several years later.

September 30

1995 — Nebraska falls behind 7-0 on an 87-yard touchdown run by Washington State's Frank Madu in the first quarter before taking charge with a 20-0 second quarter. The game finishes 35-21, making it the closest in the

Cornhuskers' run to a second consecutive national championship.

October 1

1994 — With starting quarterback Tommie Frazier on anti-coagulant drugs because of a blood-clot problem and not playing, Brook Berringer directs four consecutive scoring drives during a seven-minute span of the second quarter as Nebraska holds off Wyoming 42-32 in Lincoln. Berringer plays the second half with a partially collapsed lung, then spends the night in the hospital.

October 2

1915 — Coach Jumbo Stiehms's final team at Nebraska, featuring All American Guy Chamberlin, opens the season with a 48-13 victory against Drake at Nebraska Athletic Field to extend an unbeaten streak to 22 games. The streak will increase to 34 before ending under Doc Stewart in 1916. ■

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Wide Receiver Recruit Hopes to Play Baseball

**Injuries cut short
Pilkington's father's
career at NU**

By James Hale

The oral commitments continue to roll in for the Nebraska Cornhuskers, as they continue to set a standard that other college programs are trying to follow.

We aren't yet to October, and already the Cornhuskers have 11 commitments, trailing only Penn State, who has 13.

Nebraska has added to its wide receiver corps with its last two commitments. We talked about Lornell McPherson of Omaha Central in an earlier issue. Now, the Cornhuskers have added preseason All-American Ross Pilkington (6-foot-1, 175 pounds, with 4.4 speed in the 40-yard dash) of Loveland, Colo.

The irony of the Pilkington commitment is that Greg Pilkington, Ross' father, had his football career at Nebraska cut short because of two surgeries on his feet to alleviate turf toe. The elder Pilkington then transferred to Colorado State where he played baseball on their 1974 College World Series team.

Ross is also a former teammate of current Nebraska freshman Josh Davis, and that friendship played a role in Pilkington picking the Huskers.

"I know so much about Nebraska and what they are about that I didn't have any worries about what they are



Tight end Chris Septak, who committed early to Nebraska, says opposing teams are working to take him out of the offense.

doing," Pilkington said. "Nebraska is a class program, and Josh has been so positive about his experience so far in Lincoln. I really haven't heard anything negative at all about Nebraska, and that's one of the reasons why I committed early to them.

Ross is a chip off the old block, as he too is a football/baseball guy. The worry for Huskers fans is the upcoming pro baseball draft, where Pilkington is projected as a first- or second-round draft choice. Pilkington

is a shortstop prospect who is a three-time all-state selection. He hit an amazing .710 this past summer and wants to play both sports in college.

"From the very beginning I told every college coach that I talked to that I wanted to play both football and baseball," Pilkington said. "That ruled out some schools right away. For instance, Colorado doesn't have a baseball team. Nebraska is solid in both sports, and they don't mind me playing both. They have some history with Darin Erstad and Turner Gill playing both. I think it will be hard, and I will always be behind in baseball because those players will be hitting all fall, while I am with the football team. However, once I get on the diamond I will catch up.

"I am interested in the pros and will listen to what they have to say. A lot depends on where I will be drafted, in what round and by whom. I have a certain dollar figure in mind that I will sign for, and in what round I get drafted will determine whether I can get that figure or not."

Pilkington is quite a receiver as well, hauling in 38 passes at 18.9 yards per catch and nine touchdowns a year ago. He missed Loveland's first two games this season because of a torn knee ligament. No surgery is required.

Nebraska's search for tight ends may already be over. Back in the summer, we talked about the early commitment of Chris Septak (6-5, 240, 4.8) of Millard (West), Neb., who is rated as one of the top five tight ends in the country.

Septak has only caught five passes thus far this season, and he admits opposing teams are working to take him out of the offense.

"I am not seeing too many balls thrown my way," Septak said. "I guess teams know quite a bit about me now, and it seems that I always have two guys watching me as I come off the line of scrimmage. It doesn't matter to me as long as we win. I have a number of duties at tight end anyway. My blocking is more important than catching passes, and I am having an excellent season in that area."

Commitments for 2000

| Player | Hometown (high school) | Ht. | Wt. | Pos. |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|-----|-------|
| Ira Cooper | Omaha (Westside), Neb. | 6-1 1/2 | 220 | LB |
| Sandro DeAngelis | Buffalo, N.Y. (St. Joseph Coll.) | 5-9 | 195 | FB/K |
| Mike Erickson | Papillion (Papillion-LaVista), Neb. | 6-4 | 260 | OL |
| Martin Flaum | Denver (Northglenn), Colo. | 6-5 | 280 | OL |
| Steve Kriewald | North Loup-Scotia | 5-11 | 250 | FB |
| DeWayne Long Jr. | West Des Moines (Dowling) Iowa | 6-1 | 205 | FB |
| Lornell McPherson | Omaha (Central), Neb. | 5-11 | 175 | DB/WB |
| Ross Pilkington | Loveland, Colo. | 6-1 | 175 | WR |
| Josh Plisch | Rothschild, Wis. | 6-4 | 290 | OL |
| Jason Richenberger | Liberty, Mo. | 6-3 | 210 | LB |
| Chris Septak | Millard (West), Neb. | 6-4 | 235 | TE |

Another possible tight end recruit is Quinn Sypniewski (6-6, 260, 4.75) of Johnston, Iowa. Sypniewski is ranked as one of the top 50 players in the country and is being recruited at both tight end and defensive end.

"I guess I like tight end a little better, but I really don't care on which side of the ball I play," Sypniewski said. "I like them both, but I have always thought of myself as a tight end, but I know that I am drawing some attention on defense as well. Actually, either one is fine with me."

Sypniewski is one of the better raw athletes in the country. He won't turn 18 until the end of his senior year, and he is growing and improving each day. An ankle injury kept him out of half the games a year ago, but he still caught 13 passes for 130 yards and a touchdown. On defense, he had six sacks in one game. He is a star in basketball and was ranked No. 1 in the state in the discus.

This season, Sypniewski caught six passes for 80 yards in his first two games, while rushing for 30 yards on nine carries at fullback. On defense, he had four tackles, two tackles for losses, one sack and one caused fumble.

This past summer, Sypniewski went to the Nebraska and USC camps and also visited the campus at Colorado. Early in fall camp, Sypniewski threw out a 4.4 clocking in a 40-yard dash. His average clocking is 4.6, which is very impressive for a player his size. Sypniewski can bench 300 pounds and squats 520.

Sypniewski is still considering a number of schools, with the Cornhuskers being one of them.

"I like Nebraska because they are Nebraska," Sypniewski said. "Understand what I am saying with that. Nebraska is so good in football that if you are play football and want to be good, then you automatically like them. They have a great football tradition and turn out several academic All-Americans every year. Nebraska is just a pretty cool place. They have told me that I could start out on offense and see how it goes, and if I don't like it or things don't pan out, then I will move to defense."

Joining Nebraska on Sypniewski's recruiting list are Colorado, Purdue, Michigan, Michigan State, Colorado State, Iowa, Iowa State, Tennessee and Ohio State.

Brock Edwards (6-5, 250, 4.6) of Fort Worth (Christian), Texas, is also rated as one of the top five tight ends in the country. Edwards is another fantastic athlete who does several things on the prep level. A year ago, he rushed for 1,150 yards at running back, and he is averaging more than 100 yards rushing per game this season. He projects at tight end on the college level.

Former friend and quarterback phenom Vance Smith is currently the back-up quarterback at Texas A&M. Edwards also camped with the Aggies and liked what impressed with College Station. Edwards also camped at Texas and Florida State. Nebraska, Miami and Ohio State are also on his recruiting portfolio.

"Nebraska has one of the top football programs in the country, and I am certainly taking a look at them," Edwards said. "I hope to visit them sometime in December or January."

Rob Egan (6-3, 250, 4.9) of Sewell Washington Township, N.J., is considered one of the top tight ends in the east. Egan is hoping to visit Nebraska, Boston College and Miami. ■

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Big Offensive Day Just What Team Needed

*Crouch says all Nebraska had to do was
'execute and don't turn the ball over'*



**Mike
BABCOCK**

EARLY ON in Tom Osborne's Hall of Fame coaching career, the popular opinion was, his teams didn't make significant improvement from the beginning of the season to the end.

That opinion usually was offered as an explanation for Nebraska's inability to win against Oklahoma, and mostly had to do with offense. The Sooners occasionally struggled offensively early in the season, while Nebraska continued to play at about

the same level as it had in its opener.

By season's end, when the teams always played, Oklahoma had improved dramatically, running the option with devastating precision. Such was the claim, anyway.

In one sense, it was a testament to Osborne's preparation. You could watch the Cornhusker offense in the first couple of games and figure it was about as good as it was going to get.

In the aftermath of a frustrating loss to Oklahoma, however, it was considered a deficiency.

Frank Solich certainly hasn't had to deal with those complaints this season. Nebraska's offensive production dropped in each of its first three games. Nevertheless, Solich was undaunted.

"We need to improve in a lot of categories," he said during his weekly news conference on the Tuesday before the Missouri game. "I think the team is determined to get that done."

"We have the potential to be a good offensive football team."

Lest there be any doubt, "I think it will be," he added.

Quarterback Eric Crouch was even more adamant about the Cornhuskers' offensive potential. "It's there," he said. "We can open things up. We definitely have something to prove."

"And having a big offensive day would put a lot of that talk in the past."

By implication, if not intent, Crouch was something of a prophet, though if you want to get technical about it, Nebraska had a big "night" rather than a big "day," rolling up 476 yards in its unexpectedly lopsided, 40-10 victory against Missouri at Faurot Field.

It wasn't exactly what you'd expect from the Cornhuskers, however, because they used the pass to open up the run rather than vice-versa. Though they wouldn't have been mistaken for, say, Brigham Young or Oklahoma (check the NCAA stats), they aired it out by their standards. Crouch completed 10-of-17 passes for 143 yards and two touchdowns.

Solich hinted that Nebraska might take to the air, with qualifications, of course.

"We have the capability of throwing the ball more," he said early in the week. "I'm not really pleased that we've thrown the ball 10 times in this last game (Southern Mississippi)."

"And what was it the game before? About the same?"

For what it's worth, Nebraska completed 5-of-9 passes for 187 yards and two touchdowns against California. The Cornhuskers didn't throw much. But they were productive when they did.

Still, "you'd like to throw it about 20 times a game," Solich said.

Nebraska was capable of doing that, he said. "We have guys who can throw the football; there's no question about that. And so maybe we need to mix that in a little bit more."

But, he was quick to add: "We'll take it one step at a time. I just don't want to say, 'OK, we're going to throw the football. We're going to open this baby up.' That all sounds good."

"But it wasn't too long ago that we did (throw) to come from behind and everybody thought we were changing Nebraska's style of offense, and I was hearing, 'What happened to the run?'"

During the Southern Mississippi game, "I heard: 'Throw the ball more.'"

And so it came to pass against Missouri.

Crouch didn't quite throw 20 passes. He could have. But he had thrown 15 passes through three quarters, and the game was well in-hand. There was no reason to add insult to injury. So Nebraska stayed on the ground. And continued to

roll up yards, in traditional fashion — on the ground.

Missouri had shown it might be vulnerable to the pass, as well as the run, in high-scoring victories against Alabama-Birmingham and Western Michigan. The Tigers allowed an average of 357.5 yards, the majority through the air. Their defense appeared to be just what Nebraska needed, coming off the 20-13 victory against Southern Mississippi, in which it managed only 185 yards, 119 of them by rushing.

Despite the recent offensive problems, "I don't think we had to make very many adjustments, just execute and not turn the ball over," said Crouch, who also rushed for 92 yards and a touchdown.

"We're probably not quite where we want to be. But we're definitely getting there."

Based on their play against Missouri, the Cornhuskers certainly appeared to be improving.

When everything is clicking, "we're going to have big days," Crouch said. ■



**Eric Crouch completed 10-of-17
passes for 143 yards and two
touchdowns against Missouri.**

A close-up photograph of a soccer player in a white jersey with the number 9. The player is holding a soccer ball with both hands. The jersey has "FILA" and "Huskers" logos. The background is blurred.

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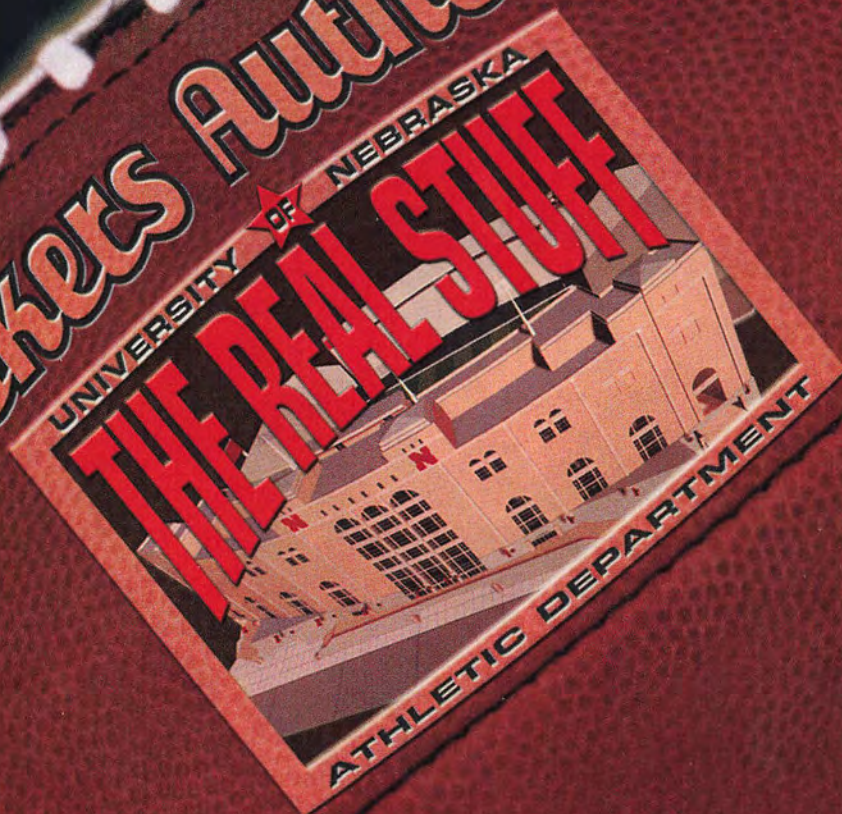
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| | CONNECTICUT | 7 p.m. |
| Sept. 12 | USC vs. Connecticut | 11 a.m. |
| | PORTLAND | 1 p.m. |
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